

HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS  
OF THE  
TOPSFIELD HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY  
VOLUME XXXIV

2009



Topsfield, Massachusetts

J. Jan Jansen, Editor



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TOPSFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

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## PREFACE

This issue of the *Historical Collections of the Topsfield Historical Society* is devoted largely to recent events in Topsfield plus some articles dealing with earlier times. Some notable events of recent years include the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the town's incorporation, the reconstruction of the Gould Barn on the Capen property, the founding of the John Kimball Scholarship Fund, the study of the Capen House and its repairs, and the enlargement of the town library.

The articles about the town's role in the Revolution and the Civil War were financed by income from the Kimball Fund. The reconstruction of the Gould Barn was the greatest undertaking by the Society since the restoration of the Capen House in 1913. It has given the Society a locale for numerous meetings since 1997 and infused a new enthusiasm in the membership through well attended worthwhile programs. The Strawberry Festival has been a winner in fund raising and in bringing the membership together in a collective effort.

Other topics might have been included in this volume; the articles that are included were chosen by the editor. Many thanks to the authors of the several articles and to Ann Savage who did the final proof-reading! In reading this booklet it is clear that many other projects are available and waiting to be completed or started in the years to come. These include providing living quarters for an on-site custodian, converting the second floor of the Capen House into more of a museum dealing with Topsfield history, relocating and restoring the East Schoolhouse, etc. It is my hope that enough Society members will rise to the occasion to accomplish these tasks!

J. Jan Jansen, Editor  
April 10, 2009



*In 2004 Gordon College received a grant from the Kimball Scholarship Fund for a study of Topsfield's role in the events leading up to the Revolutionary War. Professor Goss's students did the research and prepared an exhibit which was displayed at Masconomet Regional High School and later in the Town Library. Professor Goss summarized the findings of the students in the following paper that he presented at a Historical Society meeting.*

## **TOPSFIELD AND “THE SHOT HEARD ROUND THE WORLD”**

By K. David Goss, History Department, Gordon College

If population is used as the measure of size, Topsfield in the decade before the Revolution was the third smallest town in Essex County. It had only 773 residents according to the Massachusetts colonial census, and only 733 if you accept the figures found in the Topsfield town records. Wenham was the smallest town with a total population of 638 and Salem the largest with 5,337. The entire population of Essex County amounted to a total of 50,923 persons by 1776. Despite its diminutive size, Topsfield, at the war's outbreak, raised two companies of militia under the commands of Captains Joseph Gould and Stephen Perkins. Gould's company consisted of 63 men, and Perkins's company fielded 47 soldiers for a total contribution of 110 men from Topsfield, or approximately 15% of the town's total population.

The question is, how did this enthusiastic response come about? This is the purpose of the recent exhibition undertaken by the museum studies students from Gordon College: to tell the story of how it was that Topsfield went from a loyal and conservative Anglo-American farming community to a hotbed of Revolutionary activity in a mere decade.

The following information is derived from the research of our students and has been well documented in the new exhibition which we hope you will view and study in the next few weeks.

Topsfield's pathway to Revolution begins with the end of the French and Indian War at the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1763. For the first time in three generations Massachusetts colonists could sleep peacefully without fear of a French inspired attack. The French had been successfully driven from the western frontier and Canada, and England now dominated the Atlantic seaboard from Labrador to Georgia. It was a tremendous triumph! This triumph was bought with the blood of many British and Americans and at an enormous economic expense. England's most immediate concern was paying off a vast war debt with severely limited sources of revenue.

This was the question faced by newly crowned, King George III, who had only come to the British throne in 1761. From Parliament, the strongly recommended answer was to generate new revenues from Britain's American colonies which, up to 1763, had not made a significant monetary contribution to help maintain and support the British Empire. An ill-conceived means of accomplishing this was advanced by Parliamentary leaders in 1765 whereby a stamp tax would be applied to all colonial paper goods.

The so-called Stamp Act was designed to only impact colonials who might choose voluntarily to purchase newspapers, books, stationery, wallpapers, or legal documents. Avoidance of the tax was simply accomplished by not using such products. Parliament believed that those British subjects best suited to pay such a tax would understand that this was an indirect tax on the more educated and prosperous members of American society.

This belief proved to be a naive hope on the part of Parliament and King George III as the seaport towns of North America exploded with anti-British fervor. Mobs took to the streets destroying the private property of British government officials and stamp

distributors. Provincial legislatures called for a general boycott of all stamp-related goods bringing additional economic pressure to bear upon those who expected to raise revenue. The rationale for this activity was that the Stamp Act was a policy put into effect without the approval of the elected representatives of colonial legislatures. The phrase “no taxation without representation” became the war cry of these urban patriots who used both legal and extra-legal means of redress to make their position clear.

To what extent did the Stamp Act affect Topsfield? Actually, when the Stamp duties went into effect on November 1, 1765, they had very little direct impact on most rural, agricultural communities in New England including Topsfield. Those most affected by the Act were urban dwellers such as printers, booksellers, merchants and lawyers, not farmers. Consequently when Boston's Sons of Liberty took to the streets to destroy the recently arrived supplies of stamps, they did so without informing or gaining the support of the outlying towns. Topsfield was left out of these extra-legal protests entirely and not surprisingly, looked askance at such violent and unlawful behavior.

A case in point involved an incident when one of Boston's stamp distributors, Andrew Oliver, took possession of a supply of stamps and placed them in his warehouse for safe-keeping. The Sons of Liberty organized a protest demonstration resulting in the destruction of Oliver's warehouse and the ransacking of his home. The mob then proceeded to the residence of Lieutenant Governor, Thomas Hutchinson, attempting to tear that structure down as well, but got no further than the removal of his roof. Damage was also done to the homes of Comptroller of Customs, Benjamin Hallowell and Register of the Admiralty Court, William Story.

When Topsfield's citizens were informed of these violent and extra-legal activities, the Town Records record their complete ignorance and disapproval of such behavior. They instructed their representative to the Provincial Legislature, Captain Samuel Smith, to do

what may be possible to alleviate the suffering of those loyal subjects whose property had been destroyed, observing that “if the petitioners had suffered by being actually engaged for the good of His Majesty's subjects in this Province, they ought to have a proper allowance made out of the Province treasury.”

Later, when the Stamp Act was finally repealed, the Topsfield Town Records record the townsfolk's “gratitude for the benign actions of our most gracious Sovereign in granting repeal”. Concerning financial reparations to the injured Royal officials: “We look upon it as our greatest honor, as well as duty, always to copy after such wise, good and just examples--in consideration whereof -- in case the said sufferers (mob victims) shall make application for it, we are heartily willing to give them as much as our ability and low circumstances will admit of, provided we may do it either by subscription or by contribution, as in calamitous accidents by fire”. So motivated was Topsfield in assisting the victims of mob violence, that a small team of laborers were dispatched by the town to Boston for the purpose of helping to repair the damage done by the Sons of Liberty. Interestingly, several months later, when the mob victims did indeed ask for compensation and the conviction of mob leaders, Topsfield's citizens alter their instructions to provincial representative Smith, warning him not to vote in favor of remuneration from the provincial treasury. This shift in sentiment is explained by Reverend James H. Fitts, an historian of Topsfield who suggests that the town's “patriot freeholders, or free farmers, now thought they understood the subject (of mob violence) better than they had previously”. In other words, Topsfield citizens had done some investigating into the mob activity of Boston and the destruction of private property, and come to the conclusion that it might have been justified. To use their own words, it became evident that, their honors, Andrew Oliver and Thomas Hutchinson were not “officers serving the best interests of his Majesty's subjects” but rather enforcing a policy which violated the fundamental rights of those subjects.

Additional insight into this change of opinion is supplied by the town records of nearby Boxford which, in October, 1765 noted that:

“By the Royal Charter (of Massachusetts Bay), granted to our ancestors, the power of making laws for our internal government, and of levying taxes, is vested in the General Assembly, and, by the same Charter, the inhabitants of this Province are entitled to all the rights and privileges of natural, free-born subjects of Great Britain. The most essential rights of British subjects are those of being represented in the same body which exercises the power of levying taxes upon them, and of having their property tried by juries.”

This line of reasoning could not help but influence the folks in neighboring Topsfield. It emphasizes that although outlying communities were distanced geographically from the epicenter of Revolutionary activities, the after-shocks of urban tumult eventually reached the most rural inhabitants. Despite this fact, it would be wrong to assume that Topsfield had finally made the intellectual break with England. It had taken an initial step toward revolution, but was still essentially a loyal community.

More relevant to Topsfield and Rowley was the immediate concern for the effect of recent poor harvests and a resulting sluggish economy which required rural communities to send money to foreign ports in exchange for necessary commodities leaving them barely enough cash money to “throw off the yearly load of public tax.” Hard currency was very tight in Topsfield in 1765, and any British policy calculated to drain more away, even to a limited extent, would be opposed on pragmatic if not philosophical grounds.

Not to be underestimated in its impact upon Topsfield's people were the examples of behavior being set by the Sons of Liberty in nearby Salem and Newburyport. Salem's chapter of the Sons of Liberty had met the Stamp Act in the streets, burning stamped custom papers in the area before the London Coffee House. The patriots of Newburyport burned the effigy of the local stamp collector on two

occasions before they forced him “to promise that he would never make use of stamped paper again.”

Not surprisingly, therefore, the people of Topsfield were greatly relieved when news of the repeal of the Stamp Act reached them in 1766. But news of another crisis would follow in 1767, the infamous Townsend Act which required taxes to be paid on paper, paint, lead and tea. Once again, this was an indirect tax which was calculated to be collected from wealthy merchants who imported such goods. Beyond this were added new policies which provided for cargo inspections and the stricter enforcement of trade regulations, especially against smuggling. It was another example of faulty reasoning on the part of British officials who misunderstood the fundamental fear of American colonials not to have their rights to representation undermined by Parliamentary legislation calculated to generate revenue from Anglo-American colonies. In addition, British Custom officials frequently used Writs of Assistance to conduct thorough examinations of vessels inside and out, a policy calculated to stop a one hundred-year-old practice of circumventing English trade regulations by American merchants.

Topsfield and Boxford colonists knew well that such a tightening of the British trade regulations and enforcement of duties would result in the increase of prices to the consumer, and joined the rest of the colony in a general boycott, not only of paper, paint, lead and tea, but of all English goods. This policy of non-importation and boycott prompted Topsfield and Boxford residents to domestically manufacture many of the goods normally brought into America from England. This led to a growing sense of the patriotism of self-sufficiency, lessening colonial dependence upon British imports. At a Boxford town meeting in 1768 these sentiments were expressed in response to an anti-importation agreement then being circulated among North Shore communities:

“And, although our town is but small, it would do everything in its power towards promoting every public good, and discountenancing

all vice. Because of the poverty of the town and its situation, the inhabitants have never been able to go into the use of many articles mentioned, yet they cannot wholly excuse themselves from the use of some of the articles mentioned, yet they cannot wholly excuse themselves from the use of some of the superfluities mentioned in said votes. Therefore the Town would strongly recommend to every householder to lessen in their families the use of all foreign superfluities, and to use such things in the room thereof as shall be of their own manufacture, and to do everything they can to promote industry, economy and frugality, and to discountenance all sorts of vice and immorality."

For Topsfield, too, the Townsend Act prompted frugality and domestic economy through social activities as weaving and spinning bees which facilitated the production of homespun cloth instead of the purchase of British textiles. And yet, the town was hardly a bastion of radical political activity. When a convention of North Shore towns was convened to protest the quartering of two British regiments in Boston, Topsfield did not bother to send a representative. This is somewhat surprising in light of the participation of Boxford, Rowley, Wenham, Ipswich, Beverly, Danvers and Newbury, neighboring towns which shared many of Topsfield's concerns and characteristics.

As a community, Topsfield actively supported the non-importation agreement when the town voted in favor of a boycott of British goods on June 11, 1768. But this was, at best a conservative and non-violent form of protest, which saved townsfolk money while it announced their patriotic sympathies with their Boston and Salem brethren.

By 1770, the situation in rural North Shore communities was becoming less tolerable as the clash between urban colonists and British policies had a ripple effect in the surrounding area. On May 1 and again on June 11, 1770 the voters of Topsfield expressed their sentiments that the Townsend duties were unconstitutional and

unjust, taxes imposed upon the citizens of a colony without their consent. They further declared their displeasure with the presence of a permanent military force in Boston, and the resulting Boston Massacre which had taken place on March 5, 1770 between British troops and civilians resulting in “the murder of unarmed men.” Topsfield also reaffirms in its town records that it will not countenance the purchase or consumption of British- made goods. By 1770, the town was beginning to express serious opposition to the British policies which had plagued the colonies for the previous five years.

By November, 1772, the Boston Sons of Liberty had organized a Committee of Correspondence which devoted itself to communicating news of the infringements of the rights of British subjects in occupied Boston. This patriotic propaganda was disseminated throughout all surrounding towns including Topsfield. On November 20, a letter was received from Boston entitled: “The Rights of Men, Christians and Subjects” with an attached “List of the Infringements and Violations of these Rights.” The letters caused quite a stir in the town, and was hotly debated by the residents all through the winter of 1772-1773. Finally, in the spring, the pro-patriot faction in Topsfield asked for the town to respond in support of the Sons of Liberty and their list of grievances.

Topsfield sent back to Boston a response in June, 1773 thanking the citizens of Boston for their early vigilance on behalf of all colonists and heartily endorsing the sentiments advanced by the Sons of Liberty. Here the townsfolk express the conviction that their rights and those of all Americans are being violated by the presence of an army of British soldiers stationed in Boston. It concludes with the observation that America's British subjects are forever entitled to their rights “unless by their own act they forfeit them.” The implication here is that Topsfield still holds to the view that the only acceptable means of redress is within the bounds of lawful behavior. They conclude by stating simply that “if these violations and infringements are still continued it will prove the ruin of this

province, if not the whole continent of America, and we fear the Kingdom of Great Britain, too." No explanation is offered as to exactly what rights of native British subjects were being threatened, only that Topsfield feared for the future safety of the Mother Country as well. Clearly, the townsfolk still had a profound fear of positioning themselves in the same anti-British posture of their more radical, and violent Boston counterparts.

Not to isolate themselves from their sister communities, the town meeting in 1773, concluded with a statement pledging its support for the defense of the province against a hostile foe: "... it is affirmed that this town in particular will be ready, at all times, to join with their brethren, in any legal way, and manner to defend the life and person of his Majesty, and the lives of our brethren-his Majesty's loyal subjects, and in the same way to preserve and defend our own lawful rights, liberties and property, even to the last extremity."

The wording of this quotation infers that the community of Topsfield was torn between taking too radical a stand against the English government and its policies, of being labeled by patriotic neighbors as too conservative. That they were willing to protect and defend the life of George III, while an admirable goal, hardly seems appropriate in light of the issues under discussion. Nonetheless, it illustrates clearly the ambivalence being felt by these country farmers who perhaps did not feel the full impact of the Townsend duties as sharply as their counterparts in Salem and Boston.

In any case, the above measure was passed by Topsfield's voters "by a great majority", which then proceeded to create its own Topsfield "Committee of Correspondence", responsible for communicating the town's statement of support to the Boston Committee of Correspondence. One can only speculate at the response of the Boston Sons of Liberty to Topsfield's desire to protect the life of the king and avoid all forms of illegal protest while defending their liberties "to the last extremity."

On December 16, 1773, these same Sons of Liberty boarded merchant vessels of the East India Trading Company in Boston Harbor and proceeded to empty them of their cargoes of tea. Three-hundred and forty-two chests of tea were thrown into Boston Harbor, destroying the private property of London merchants attempting to take advantage of the recent passage of the Tea Act which had been passed by Parliament in May of that year. It was the lit match that ignited the British powder keg, prompting a series of repressive pieces of legislation called by Boston's radical Whigs "the intolerable acts."

Topsfield's reaction to this crisis was to compose a strongly worded letter on January 20, 1774, saying that they had voted as a community not to buy or sell any tea that has, or may be exported from Great Britain. They quickly add that they "approved every Legal Method the Town of Boston and Others have taken to prevent the said Company's tea from being landed, and that they would consider any merchant continuing to import tea from Great Britain Enemies to all the American Colonies." Their endorsement of all legal means of redress still belies a generally uncomfortable attitude concerning the wanton destruction of private property by mob violence. For the citizens of Topsfield, even at this late date, boycotts of tea were an acceptable and legitimate means of redress, while, the destruction of private property, even in protest, was still to violate the King's Law! What is interesting is that while many other Essex County towns issued statements approving of the action of the Sons of Liberty, Topsfield did not.

On September 6, 1774 the towns of Essex County, Massachusetts, called for a Congress to meet in Ipswich for the purpose of devising a strategy to resist British oppression. Topsfield sent Samuel Smith, Enos Knight, and John Gould as its representatives. At this meeting a platform of protest was created objecting strenuously to the recent oppressive acts of Parliament as well as the arbitrary conduct of ministers and the hostile operations of Governor General Gage.

This document was then dispatched to the “Grand American Congress” then meeting in Philadelphia.

During the following month, the Provincial Congress met in Cambridge on October 11<sup>th</sup>. It was presided over by patriot firebrand, John Hancock and was called to keep the local communities firmly on track towards confrontation with Britain. Topsfield again sent Samuel Smith as its representative with instructions that he should:

- (1) Acknowledge George III as his town's rightful sovereign;
- (2) support and maintain all constitutional and chartered rights;
- (3) and resist all the oppressive acts of Parliament, but be mindful of the recent resolutions of the Continental Congress. (This was a reference to the so-called “Olive Branch Petition” issued by the 1774 Continental Congress begging George III to resolve differences with the colonies.)

At Cambridge, on October 26, 1774, the Provincial Congress adopted a plan for all Massachusetts towns to enroll and train militia. The same legislation designated certain locations, Worcester, Concord, Salem and others, as repositories for weapons, powder and ammunition. Since this new policy applied to Topsfield, within weeks of its passage, Topsfield began enrolling its farmers as citizen-soldiers.

Within this overall category of militia, there were three distinct groups of soldier-types:

- (1) The Trained Band consisting of all able-bodied Topsfield men between the ages of 16 and 50.
- (2) The Alarm List including all other able-bodied men up to the age of 70.
- (3) Minutemen, one quarter of the Trained Band, who agreed to hold themselves in a constant state of readiness to march at a minute's notice.

Each soldier, from officer to private, was to equip himself with a musket, cartridge box and knapsack. The "minutemen" were required further to drill twice on a weekly basis. Following each drill session, they would repair either to the meeting house to hear a patriotic sermon, or to the local public house for refreshment at the town's expense. Far from being a burden, Reverend Fitt's of Topsfield remarks that "To be a private was regarded as an honor: but to be chosen an officer was a mark of distinction."

On Monday, December 5, 1774, in obedience to the instruction of the Provincial Congress, the men of Topsfield of military age, assembled on common land and formed themselves into the Topsfield militia. By election they chose Joseph Gould as their first captain, then adjourned until the following day. On Tuesday, December 6, they elected Stephen Perkins as their second captain. They next formed two companies. Captain Gould's Company consisted of fifty-nine privates and non-commissioned officers. Captain Perkins' Company consisted of forty-seven privates and non-commissioned officers. This group of one hundred and six citizen-soldiers were collectively known as the "Topsfield Alarm List and Training Band". Gould's Company then elected Samuel Cummings as Lieutenant and Thomas Moore as ensign. Perkins' Company elected Solomon Dodge as Lieutenant and David Perkins as ensign. All that remained was to establish which individuals would be set apart as minuteman.

On January 19, 1775, Topsfield as a town voted to comply with the recommendation of the Provincial Congress respecting the enlistment of minutemen. The town then proceeded to designate a time and place each week for the minuteman to drill. The issue was renewed again on March 7 and again on April 11, 1775 to provide for the enlistment of minutemen and their schedule of weekly drills, as well as their monthly pay for two half-days per week of one shilling per man per half day, drawn from the town treasury. Each Topsfield minuteman therefore earned a salary of two shillings for special drill service of two-half-days per week.

Despite this generous bounty, there seems to have been some difficulty in encouraging enlistments for this elite group. The Topsfield Town Records note on March 7, 1775 that:

“Voted to give encouragement to such minuteman as shall enlist themselves agreeable to ye recommendation of Provincial Congress, that encouragement shall be the same as was reported to be by a former Town meeting which is as follows: That when so many able-bodied men have enlisted themselves as amounts to the number of one quarter part of the Training Band, to do Duty agreeable to said recommendation; and every man that enlists himself shall be enjoined to equip himself with arms and all other things agreeable to said recommendation and shall be enjoined to attend military duty two half days per week, every week. During the Town's pleasure-and shall be paid one shilling for each half-day the Town continues them in said service-the pay not to exceed two half-days in each week; and the Captain who shall have command of these men as enlist themselves in said service, shall at the end of every month, give certificate to the Selectmen of how many half-days each soldier has attended duty aforesaid, and the Selectmen shall give orders for the Town Treasurer to pay each of them one shilling for every half-day they have spent as afore-said.”

In other words, the town of Topsfield would not issue any payments until every one of the minutemen, amounting to between 26 and 27 individuals, (one quarter of the 106 members of the Alarm List and Training Band) had voluntarily signed up and met the requirements of having provided themselves with all the necessary military equipment. The somewhat embarrassing fact was that in March, 1775, town treasurer, Jeremiah Averill, had been presented with a bill for a total of seven minutemen who had already begun drilling, and were asking for compensation in the amount of 19 shillings, or five half days of drill during the month of March per man. To the pragmatic town selectmen, the cost hardly seemed worth the effort. The purpose of the expenditure was to prepare a formidable and well

drilled military force. No one would be paid by Topsfield until there was a full complement of volunteers drilling on a regular basis.

The enthusiastic Topsfield minutemen who were already enlisted, drilling and requesting payment were: Henry Bradstreet, Joshua Towne, Jr., Benjamin Gould, Dudley Bixby, Joseph Symonds and Ezra Perkins. But fortunately more than these seven individuals would respond on the morning of April 19, 1775, when a post-rider arrived in Topsfield at about 10:00 am. with news of the Lexington engagement.

On that occasion, Topsfield's farmers were already hard at work with their spring planting. The Reverend John Cleaveland of Topsfield, later recounted that for these newly recruited citizen soldiers, "there was no hesitation. The plow stayed in mid-furrow" and within the hour many Topsfield men were on their way to the scene of the conflict. According to one account a number of them left immediately on horseback--- not willing to wait to march with the rest of the militia.

Reverend Cleaveland, in his first-hand account, describes the scene in the early afternoon as the Topsfield troops reached the British retreat along Battle Road:

"Joseph Gould commanded one of the Topsfield companies. When and where, exactly, they came up with the retreating enemy, I do not know. Somewhere they found them, and from behind a low wall or dyke, they began their murderous fire. But their heroic captain disdained such shelter. He thought it perhaps undignified for an officer to lie down. So he stood bolt upright and gave his orders to the company-faced the enemy and the bullets and as good luck would have it, came off unhurt."

On that fateful day, Topsfield had managed to muster fifty-nine privates and non-commissioned officers in Gould's Company which included Captain Joseph Gould, Lieutenant Samuel Cummings,

Ensign Thomas Moore, Sergeants Nehemiah Herrick, John Peabody, David Town, Jr., Thomas Porter, Corporals Cornelius Balch, Ebenezer King, Benjamin Gould and drummer, Elijah Perkins. During the Lexington-Concord Campaign, they saw five days of service and marched sixty miles. Captain Gould received one pound, six shillings and five pence for his services and each private was paid twelve shillings and one and three-quarters pence.

Topsfield's Second Company under Captain Stephen Perkins mustered forty-seven men including privates and officers. Those in positions of leadership included: Captain Stephen Perkins, Lieutenant Solomon Dodge, 2nd Lieutenant David Perkins, Sergeants Jacob Kimball, Nathaniel Dorman, Thomas Cummings and Corporals Benjamin Hobbs, Ezra Perkins and Josiah Lamson. Their service lasted two-and-one-half days, yet marched the same sixty miles as Gould's Company.

Besides these two Topsfield companies, there were Topsfield men whose farms bordered near other surrounding towns who marched to Lexington and Concord with their neighboring units of militia from Boxford and Wenham. Among these notable exceptions was Jacob Gould, a Topsfield farmer whose farm lay along the Boxford line. He found himself in command of a fifty-seven man company of Boxford militia at the Concord engagement. Captain William Perley, commander of the fifty-two man, Second Boxford Company mentions that he had a number of Topsfield men in his ranks as well.

Other anecdotes of the day emphasize the patriotic and immediate response of many Topsfield citizens to the crisis. Richard Hood, recalled years later that he was plowing in a field with his father, John and brother, Samuel, and-upon hearing the alarm-- left them standing there as he ran to the militia muster. Asa Gould later recalled that he dropped his hoe and marched to Lexington in his shirt-sleeves, while Corporal Benjamin Gould returned to Topsfield proudly bearing a bullet scar from the Battle Road engagement. And

there was no doubt that the Topsfield troops saw some heavy action on April 19, 1775 and remained longer than many other militia companies following the fight.

Captain Perkins's Company returned to Topsfield on April 21, while Gould's Company returned on April 23, 1775. Fortunately for Topsfield only a few soldiers were wounded, but none were killed. On the following day, it was decided that a New England army of 30,000 men was needed and that Massachusetts should supply 13,600 of that number to maintain a siege around Boston. To aid in the siege, a new company was raised in the Topsfield area consisting of soldiers from several surrounding towns. This new company included twenty-eight Topsfield men, seventeen from Ipswich, six from Beverly, two from Wenham, and one each from Danvers and Middleton.

The new company returned immediately to military service and were stationed in the town of Menotomy (later Arlington), near the Black Horse Tavern. It was from this camp that Corporal Ezra Perkins would write to his father in Topsfield on June 14, 1775:

Sir,

I take this opportunity to inform you that I am in good Health and all the rest of our Company, and I hope that these lines find you so too. And I would be glad if you would dye my third stokins (sic) a light blue and send them when you send my shirts and fetch me a fork. And I have no nuse (sic) down here as there is with you. And I would be glad if you would send me three pound and a half of sugar and fetch it down when you come down.

Ezra Perkins

Later in June, the Topsfield Company, under the command of Captain John Baker, was engaged at the Battle of Bunker Hill as part of Colonel Moses Little's Regiment. It had a total strength of four hundred men in nine companies. On the morning of June 17, they were marched from Monotomy and instructed to guard Lechmere

Point in east Cambridge near Charlestown. They arrived at their station near the latter part of the Bunker Hill engagement. By this time Colonel Prescott had already been killed and his men, now out of ammunition, had been driven from their redoubts on the crest of the hill. Captain Baker's Topsfield Company along with the company of Captain Ezra Lunt, were given the task of covering the retreating colonial troops. A contemporary eyewitness described their action:

“This rear guard did good service by their brave and well directed fire. They effectively kept the Enemy at bay until the Neck was crossed and the retreat accomplished.”

Sergeant Ezra Gould's account of the day provides a little more detail of the Topsfield men in the latter stages of the Bunker Hill engagement:

“On the 17th of June was ordered on guard at Lechmere's Point, Colonel Asa Whitcomb commanding the guard. After the battle had commenced for some time, our guard was ordered to reinforce the troops on the hill; but when we got on the Neck, we met them retreating, yet kept on till we met General (Israel) Putnam, who spoke to Col. Whitcomb and he retreated. While on the Neck, the enemy fired on us from the ship that was in the Charles River, and the floating batteries came up the Mystic River within small gun shot of us. Colonel Whitcomb took me in front of him, a little to the left. He placed me in a situation for them to take aim at. The first shot struck the ground a little before me and rebounded --- and as it passed--- struck my musket in my left hand. The second (shot) struck the ground directly in front of my feet. The third struck in the same hole, and made it deeper. I turned my eye's to the guard and found them retreating. I was the last man on the Neck. As I returned, I got through a fence on my right, seeing the ground more favorable to cover me-and when I had gone about a rod, I saw the flash of their guns, and dropped to the ground. The balls passed over my

back and struck a little beyond me. I returned to the guard and found them all safe."

Among the many Topsfield men who saw action at Bunker Hill were John Hood, Israel Herrick and the former captain of Topsfield's Second Company, Captain Stephen Perkins. By June, 1775, however, Perkins was in command of an infantry company primarily raised in the area of Newburyport. For all these men, as well as for the population of Topsfield, the decision for revolution had already been made. Necessity had forced the hands of Topsfield's reluctant patriots into endorsing a war against their former monarch and mother country. There would be no turning back.

It would still take another year for the thirteen colonies to come to grips with this reality, however. During the interim, the towns of Massachusetts had been asked by the Massachusetts House of Representatives to "express their minds with respect to American Independence of the Kingdom of Great Britain". In response to this inquiry, on June 14, 1776, Topsfield's citizens instructed their representative, John Gould, in a statement that summed up the community's sentiment:

"A few years ago, Sir, such a question would have put us in a great surprise, and we apprehend, would have been treated with the utmost contempt. We, this Town, then thought ourselves happy in being the subjects of the King of Great Britain, it being our parent state; and always looked upon it as our duty as well as Interest to defend and support the honor and dignity of the Crown of Great Britain. But the scene is now changed, our minds and our sentiments are now altered. She that we called our Mother Country and Parent State is now, without any just Cause or Injury done by these colonies, become their greatest enemy. The unprovoked Injuries these colonies have received; the unjustifiable and unconstitutional claims that have been made on these colonies by the Courts of Great Britain to tax us and take away our Substance from us, have been cruel and unjust to the highest degree. For these reasons, Sir, as well

as many others that might be mentioned, we are Confirmed in the opinion that the United Colonies will be greatly wanting in their Duty, both to the Great Governor of the Universe, to themselves and posterity, if Independence of the Kingdom of Great Britain is not declared as soon as may be. These being our Sentiments.

Having thus freely spoken Our Sentiments in respect to Independence, we now instruct you, Sir, to provide to the Honorable Continental Congress the strongest assurances that if, for the safety of the United Colonies, they shall declare America to be independent of the Kingdom of Great Britain, your Constituents will support and defend the measure with their lives and fortunes to the utmost of their power."

Captain Stephen Perkins

Solomon Dodge Israel Clarke, Jr.

A Committee appointed by the Topsfield Town Meeting,  
June 14, 1776

From this point onward, Topsfield would join the ranks of the American Revolution and invest their men and money in an eight year long struggle to win independence from Great Britain. The legacy of the 110 Topsfield citizen soldiers who served is reflected in the documents and collections of the Topsfield Historical Society and Topsfield Town Records which still preserve the materials that tell their story. This is the story which our exhibition tells. It is our hope that it be remembered by future generations of Topsfield residents.

Editor's Note:

The Town Clerk has a number of documents dating from the Revolutionary War period among which are the town record books dating from those years. When the Continental Congress voted the Declaration of Independence, copies were distributed to all the colonies. In Massachusetts copies were printed in Salem for all the towns with the suggestion that the Declaration be copied in the town

clerk record books. This was done by Town Clerk Samuel Smith. Shown below is a photograph of part of a page in the Topsfield Record Book showing the beginning of the Declaration of Independence. The text is readable.

• The following is the Declaration of Independence of the American Colony of the Town of Topsfield written in English July 4<sup>th</sup> 1776

A Declaration of the Representatives of the United States of America. In General Congress Assembled, When in the Course of human Events, it becomes necessary for the people to dissolve the Political Bands which connect them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the Earth, the Separate and Equal Station to which Nature and of Nature and of Nature's God Subordinate, it is their Right to alter or to the opinions of Mankind begin or that they should be free from the Tyrants which impel to such a separation. We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, we hold that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these Rights, we must have a Government among men, deriving their just powers from the Consent of the Governed, that to be secure any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People

*This study was funded by a Kimball Scholarship Fund grant to the History Department of Gordon College. The research was done by Emily Marsan, a student, and her academic advisor, Professor Goss. The paper was delivered by Professor Goss at a meeting of the Topsfield Historical Society on October 26, 2006.*

## **TOPSFIELD AND THE CIVIL WAR**

By K. David Goss, Gordon College

In 1860 the population of the town of Topsfield was 1,292 people. Approximately one third of this number were adult males; approximately 430 men above eighteen years of age. Of this group one hundred thirty two served in the United States military during the Civil War. Of these, thirty-one would lose their lives as a direct consequence of military service. This represents slightly over 21% of all those who served from Topsfield, making the Civil War Topsfield's most costly conflict in terms of loss of life. This is the story of that struggle and particularly the story of Topsfield's men and women who endured it. (*Civil War Document File*, Topsfield Town Records, Topsfield Town Hall)

Before the outbreak of the Civil War, Topsfield had established a long-standing tradition of patriotism and community pride. This was based in large part upon the town's impressive support of the patriotic cause during the American Revolution. Every Fourth of July, speeches and festivities were held on Topsfield Common to honor the 103 patriots who had served in the Continental forces during the War of Independence.

Beyond this, Topsfield had long been known as a community generally sympathetic to the abolitionist cause. Its proximity to Boston and the North Shore, both hotbeds of abolitionist activity, made Topsfield a natural haven for abolitionist ideals. During the two decades prior to the outbreak of the Civil War, the town had played host to several anti-slavery rallies, and by 1860 had its own

abolitionist society. Incidentally the banner of this organization still exists within the collections of the Topsfield Historical Society.



1856 political banner mounted in the Gould Barn

From a political perspective, Topsfield in 1860 was conservative, clinging fervently to the remnant of the Whig Party until its final collapse. When this occurred in the mid-1850's, the majority of the town made the transition, along with Abraham Lincoln, to the newly established Republican Party. In fact, the town of Topsfield overwhelmingly supported Lincoln's presidential campaign in 1860 and again in 1864. (*Topsfield Town Records*, Topsfield Town Hall).

This was Topsfield on the eve of the Civil War, a politically conservative, pro-abolitionist, predominantly agricultural community with deep patriotic roots going back to the earliest days of the Revolution. Added to this was the town's strong Republican tendency in support of Lincoln at a time when Lincoln, although he carried New England except Rhode Island, received merely 39.8%

of the total popular vote, and only won the presidential election of 1860 because the American voter base was divided between four candidates. (James MacPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, p 232-33).

Despite this national distaste for Lincoln, Topsfield loved the man, and it is therefore not surprising that the town responded enthusiastically when the new president called for volunteers in 1861. Indeed, within hours of the news that Fort Sumter had been shelled by Southern artillery, three Topsfield farmers left their fields and walked to Salem's recruitment station to enlist in the Union Army.

These latter-day patriots were James W. Wilson, David Casey and Edward Otis Gould. All three would survive the conflict and return to their plows by 1865. But these three were only the first volunteers. In May 1861, less than one month following Fort Sumter, at the Topsfield town meeting, it was voted to have an immediate recruitment drive in response to Lincoln's April 15th call for 75,000 volunteer soldiers from the free states of the North (*Civil War Document File*, Topsfield Town Records, Topsfield Town Hall).

By the end of the Topsfield town meeting that evening, one hundred thirteen men had stepped forward to enlist. For many it was the first step on a path that would end in death somewhere in the South, but all volunteers of 1861 were motivated by their patriotic desire to preserve the Union, following in the footsteps of their Topsfield ancestors of 1776.

What proved most convenient for many new recruits was the location of the camp of basic training. While many Massachusetts volunteers were sent to camp and drill at Camp Meigs in Readville, Massachusetts or on Boston Common, Topsfield recruits received their introduction to military life in their hometown at Camp Stanton, located at the southwest corner of Lockwood Lane and Washington Streets. The training camp was named after Edwin M.

Stanton, a notable Republican political figure from Ohio who served as United States Secretary of War from 1862 to 1868. (*Map of Historic Locations in Topsfield*, Topsfield Historical Society Collections, Gould Barn).

It was here at Camp Stanton, along a portion of Washington Street, that dozens of white canvas tents were pitched and bypassing Topsfield citizens could witness local boys being drilled in the basics of military life. It was for many of them a major change from the rigors of farm life, or work in Topsfield's growing shoe-making industry, to learning close quarter drill, loading and volley-firing single-shot, .58 caliber rifles and responding to orders automatically. Most would never be the same again.

Unfortunately, the eldest son, John Phillips Smith of Company A, Massachusetts Heavy Artillery, who had re-enlisted after his tour of duty with the Massachusetts 14th Volunteer Infantry had expired, was captured by Confederates at the Siege of Petersburg ( although George Francis Dow believes it to have been the Battle of Gaines Mill in June, 1862, but this seems unlikely) on June 22, 1864. He was sent to Andersonville Prison where he died on or about August 14, 1864 and is buried along with a number of other Topsfield soldiers in the mass grave located at the Andersonville Prison historic site.

It is noteworthy to remember that the Confederate detention camp for Union soldiers at Andersonville, Georgia, also known as Camp Sumter, was built in February, 1864 and was in existence for only fourteen months. It was originally intended to hold 13,000 prisoners, but by August, 1864 had reached its maximum capacity of 32,000 inmates. Unable to provide adequate supplies to sustain the prison population, the Confederate government allowed the Union prisoners to starve to death rather than release them in their weakened state. Of the over 45,000 soldiers confined at Andersonville, over

13,000 died of malnutrition or disease. Of these, five soldiers were natives of Topsfield. These were:

John Phillips Smith and Daniel H. Smith, both of whom served in the 14<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts, and Daniel Hoyt; N. Harrison Roberts and Henry P. Kneeland all of the 19<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment. All died in 1864.

One of most graphic descriptions of this hellish place is provided by a soldier who survived imprisonment there:

“Would that I was an artist and had the material to paint this camp and all its horrors, or the tongue of some eloquent statesman and had the privilege of expressing my mind to our honored rulers in Washington. I should glory to describe this Hell on Earth where it takes seven of its occupants to make a shadow.”

The Confederate commander of Camp Sumter, Colonel Henry Wirz, a Swiss immigrant, was the only Confederate soldier charged with war crimes at the end of the war. He was condemned and hanged for “wanton cruelty” in November, 1865.

This brings us to the question of other Topsfield Civil War deaths. Many Topsfield men made the supreme sacrifice to preserve the Union. Two of these casualties were Lewis K. Perkins and William Welch, Jr., both of whom succumbed to swamp fever while serving with Massachusetts troops on Morris Island, South Carolina. Their deaths occurred during the ill-fated campaign to capture Battery Wagner at the entrance to Charleston Harbor. Famous for the attack of the 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment, the first black regiment in the United States Army, the campaign resulted in over 1,500 Union and only 154 Confederate deaths.

Other Topsfield war casualties included cavalry trooper, Eugene Todd and infantry private, John Warren Lake, both of whom died of fever in Port Hudson, Louisiana during the early summer of 1863. These men had been part of the famous Port Hudson siege which

transpired between May 21 and July 9, 1863. Port Hudson was the last Confederate military stronghold on the eastern shore of the Mississippi River. Located just north of Vicksburg, it held out only five days longer than the nearby city itself. The low lying malarial, mosquito-infested swamps were nearly as deadly to Northern troops as Confederate cannon and rifle fire.

Down river from Port Hudson and Vicksburg was New Orleans where Topsfield artilleryman, John H. Bradstreet died of malaria followed on June 4, 1863 by a soldier whose family once owned the Topsfield Historical Society's barn, Private Emerson P. Gould. Gould was serving as part of General Butler's occupational force in the 48<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry. His death as well as those of the three above mentioned Topsfield casualties underscores the grim fact that during the Civil War disease took the lives of 197,000 Union and 140,000 Confederate troops, while battlefield deaths accounted for only 112,000 Union and 94,000 Confederate casualties.

But Topsfield men saw more than their share of fighting. A number died in some of the most vicious confrontations of the war. Among these, Private Swinerton Dunlop on December 15, 1862, marched straight into the hail of lead which destroyed 1,152 Union troops at Marye's Heights in Fredericksburg, Virginia and survived. This Union defeat was attributable as much to Union General Ambrose Burnside's incompetence as to General Robert E. Lee's brilliance as a master of tactical defense. Later, however, Swinerton Dunlop met his death in May, 1864 at the Battle of the Wilderness which lasted from May 5 through 7 and pitted Ulysses S. Grant against Robert E. Lee.

But it was during the Siege of Petersburg in late 1864 that Topsfield made its most significant contribution to the war. Here were captured Privates Daniel and John Phillips Smith and Daniel Hoyt, N. Harrison Roberts and Henry Kneeland, but most conspicuous for bravery was Lieutenant James Dunlop who died at the head of his

company during the infamous Battle of the Crater on July 30, 1864. He and his men had penetrated so far into the Confederate lines that his body could not be retrieved by his comrades and was buried inside the perimeter of fortifications by the Confederates themselves. (Miscellaneous letters in <http://members3.clubphoto.com/james252265/418769/guest/topsfieldhistory>)

But death was not always to be found on the battlefield or in the military hospital. In 1865, two Topsfield veterans returned home to die from illnesses contracted while serving in the Army. These two were Privates Hayward Wildes and Otis F. Dodge. Although they died in their native town, their names are listed on the marble plaque in Topsfield Town Hall along with all the other Topsfield men who sacrificed themselves in the Union cause during the Great Rebellion. This list reads as follows:

John Bradstreet; James Brown; Moses Deland; Royal A. Deland; Albert Dickinson; Otis Dodge; Lt. James Dunlop; Swinerton Dunlop, William H.H. Foster; Murdock Frame; Wick Glispen; Emerson Gould; William Hadley; George Hobson; Francis Hood; Daniel Hoyt; John Hoyt; William James; Austin Kinsman; Alfred Kneeland; Henry Kneeland; John Warren Lake; Chester Peabody; Lewis Perkins; Hanson Roberts; Daniel Smith; John P. Smith; John Stevens; Eugene Todd; William Welch, Jr., and Hayward Wildes. (Honor Roll Plaque, Topsfield Town Hall.)

But what of the survivors? Topsfield produced two "camps" of the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R) which were comprised of those veterans who returned home. Their legacy is most evident at Pine Grove Cemetery where cast iron markers identify each G.A.R. grave, often with American flags placed by present-day veterans each Memorial Day. But lest we think that these men returned to civilian life without a thought of their comrades-in-arms, there are numerous anecdotes that prove the contrary. These men were brothers in a fraternity forged by war. They would support each other as long as life allowed them to do so.

The most outstanding example of this tendency for Topsfield may be witnessed in the example of Private Joseph Lovett of Company F, 40<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry. Another Topsfield native, Lovett enlisted on August 15, 1862 and was soon attached to the garrison defending Washington, D.C. Later he was reassigned to a tour of duty on Folly and Morris Islands near Charleston, South Carolina. In 1864 he was sent with the 40<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts to Florida until May of that year, then served the remainder of the war in Virginia where he was captured at the Battle of Drury's Bluff. During the battle, Lovett had been wounded in the leg, and it was amputated by a Confederate surgeon. Returning home in June, 1865, he made it his task to look after the widows and orphans of Topsfield's veterans, securing for them financial assistance and veteran's benefits as needed. His efforts sometimes required travel and correspondence as evidenced in a letter now in the Civil War archives at Topsfield Town Hall describing a trip made by Lovett to the Boston State House in 1866 to meet with state officials on behalf of Topsfield's Mrs. Deland who had lost a husband and son, Moses and Royal Deland, and a Mrs. Thomas Perkins, who had lost her husband, Thomas. His negotiations proved successful as he concludes the letter by stating that: "I am happy to say that both of these ladies can now draw funds under our new State law, but I found moving up and down the State House steps a deal difficult with my crutch" (*Letter from Joseph Lovett*, Topsfield Town Records, Topsfield Town Hall)

Such was the caliber of Topsfield's Civil War veterans, selfless, patriotic and without self-pity, they more than rose to the high standards set by their patriotic ancestors of 1776. The last of these veterans was William H. Wildes who died in Topsfield in 1930. Wildes' passing marks the end of the Civil War era in Topsfield, but the town still maintains several memorials which draw the public's attention to Topsfield's role in the conflict. Already mentioned are the veteran graves in Topsfield's Pine Grove Cemetery which include numerous cast-iron G.A.R. markers, and interestingly a single Confederate soldier's grave of Private Buckner "Buck"

Taylor, a native of Virginia who migrated to Topsfield after the war and settled down as a stone mason. His is the only grave of a non-Union Civil War veteran in Topsfield, and one of the very few Confederate graves in New England. Similarly, as mentioned previously there is a white marble plaque located at the top of the stairwell in Topsfield Town Hall which bears the names of the thirty-one Topsfield men who lost their lives during the war.

Perhaps most importantly, Topsfield is the location of one of the most artistically significant, bronze Civil War memorials in Massachusetts. Located directly in front of Topsfield Public Library, it is entitled, "The Wounded Color Sergeant". This magnificent sculpture is the work of the internationally known sculptress, Mrs. Theo A. Ruggles Kitson and was erected in Topsfield in 1914 at a cost of nearly \$8,000. It was a gift to the community by Dr. Justin Allen, a physician who had practiced in Topsfield for over forty years. Its purpose is to honor "The memory of the men of Topsfield who enlisted in defense of their country in the Great Rebellion of 1861 – 1865". What sets it apart from the standard memorial statues seen in most New England towns is the scene it depicts which was suggested by a member of the Soldier's Monument Committee, Alphonso T. Merrill. It shows a fallen standard-bearer handing a shattered Union flag to a passing comrade who raises it in his right hand while holding his rifle in his left.

Sadly this inspirational, privately commissioned work of art, "The Wounded Color Sergeant" by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had become badly tarnished, darkened by green mold and air pollutants. It was in desperate need of conservation. Recently, the Topsfield Historical Society under the leadership of Society President Norman Isler recognized the need, and utilizing the remnant of funds from Dr. Allen's original bequest, undertook a professional refurbishment of the memorial. It remains today a fitting and beautifully restored tribute to all those who represented the Town of Topsfield during the Civil War.



**The Wounded Color Sergeant monument on the Common**

John Kimball resided in Topsfield from 1957 to 2001 and during those years was actively involved in town affairs and in the Topsfield Historical Society. He served as town Moderator for 28 years and was a Society Director for many years. He had a deep interest in American history and in local history. After his death his family established a scholarship fund for students to pursue the study of history, particularly as related to Topsfield. Jack shared his historical knowledge and interest in many talks including the following presentation to the Historical Society before the Kimballs moved to California. His description of the town dates to 2000; there have been many changes since then.



## TOPSFIELD BETWEEN 1950 AND 2000

By John Kimball

I have been asked to talk on the history of Topsfield from 1950 to the present. A lot of things have happened over the last 50 years and I hope you will bear with me and accept my apologies if I skip over or do not sufficiently emphasize some incidents that seem more important to you than the ones that I mention. I invite questions and comments anytime. I want to thank some long-time residents of the town: Grace and Yolanda Marciano, Toya Gangi, Ellie Ansteensen and Belman Carter for the help they have given me.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s I was briefly a member of the Long Range School Planning Committee, whose principal function was to project the future elementary school population in order to plan for additions to the elementary school or, if necessary, to build

a new school. In the process, we reviewed the town's population back to 1900 and I was struck by the fact that the town's total population didn't vary by more than 200 people up or down from 1,000 to the end of WWII. By 1950, however, it had increased to 1,409 and for about 25 years it almost exploded until it stabilized at about 5,900 people in the late 1970s. It has increased lately and as of January 1, 1999 it was 6,045. So you see rapid growth has been one of the major problems of the town. I will come back to that.

In 1950 Topsfield was little more than a village centered on Main Street, Central Street, Grove Street, Park Street, High Street and Washington Street.

It had a few moderately sized farms and several large estates, most of which had been built in the late 19th or early 20th centuries as summer homes for affluent residents of Boston or Salem.

There were just two churches, the Congregational and the Catholic churches. There was one school for all twelve grades. There was no full time police department, Bill Peabody was the chief and the office of the police department was in his home on Colrain Road. The fire department was staffed by volunteers. Its equipment was kept in the present highway building, except for one engine which was kept in Woodbury's garage.

Town water had been installed for about 250 takers in 1949 and the water mains have been extended in almost every year since. In the late 1940s the town adopted substantially the same zoning by-laws that it now has. In 1950 there were 45.15 miles of roads in the town some of which were still unpaved. In 1949 the town purchased 10 acres of land off Bare Hill Road and established an open, burning dump.\*

\* When the dump was abandoned the site was covered over with fill from the Big Dig in Boston and became Pye Brook Community Park.

The Topsfield Fair took place over the week of Labor Day and included pari-mutual betting on dog races. School didn't start until after the fair was over so that the local school kids could make a few dollars working at the fair. Later when Wonderland dog track in Revere started to hold races over the Labor Day weekend, the dates of the fair were moved to include Columbus Day. There were 9 graduates in the class of 1950 at Topsfield High School and the entire town budget was \$148,377.83.

1950 was also the Tri-Centennial year of the town's incorporation and the chairman of the celebration was our own Curtis Campbell. The event was celebrated from August 15<sup>th</sup> to August 20<sup>th</sup> with special church services, a chicken dinner banquet at the Parish House, a parade, a baseball game, a country dance, a bean supper, a band concert, an open house, re-enactments of historical events, and a bonfire.



From the 1950 Tri-Centennial Parade

By 1950 Topsfield was studying regionalization of the school system but at a town meeting in that year it rejected a regional district with Hamilton, Wenham, and Manchester.

In 1949 the State Department of Public Works announced that US Route 1 was to be relocated to the western part of town and by 1952 a road was being built where Interstate 95 is now located, and the old Route 1 became State Route 17. Route 1, or the Turnpike, got its designation of Route 1 back when the new road was designated part of the federal interstate system in the mid 1950s.

By 1951 the need for additional school space had become pressing and, at a special town meeting in February of that year, the town voted to appropriate \$250,000 to build and equip an elementary school addition. This was the first addition to the school which, by the way, was not called Proctor School yet. It was just the Topsfield School and although the field behind it was known as Proctor Field, the school would not be named Proctor School until the Steward School was built. The addition consisted of six classrooms, an auditorium, a gymnasium, and a cafeteria and it was completed and ready for occupancy in the fall of 1952.

The problems associated with the growth of the town continued through the 1950s, 60s and 70s and I will mention them as I go along. But for the moment I would like to give you a picture of downtown Topsfield as it existed in 1950.

First - Main Street was considerably narrower in 1950. Parking in front of the stores was diagonal instead of parallel. Gil's store sat out in an open space about where the present vacant supermarket is \* with one or two other houses. The common and Main Street, as well as other streets, were lined with beautiful old elm trees, some three or four feet in diameter.

\* Dawson Hardware in 2008

Where the entrance to the shopping center is now located there was a large, old house called the Bailey House. It had a chalk factory behind it and they both burned in 1957.

The Post Office was where the present "Sweets" store is.\* In 1951 it moved across the road and occupied the building that now houses the House of Pizza and finally moved to its present location when that building was built in 1964. The House of Pizza building became an insurance office, then the offices of Woodbury Fuel, and finally the House of Pizza.

There was a town well and hand pump on the east side of Main Street opposite the entrance to the shopping center. A horse trough had originally been with it.



**Topsfield Apothecary in late 1950s and angle parking on Main Street**

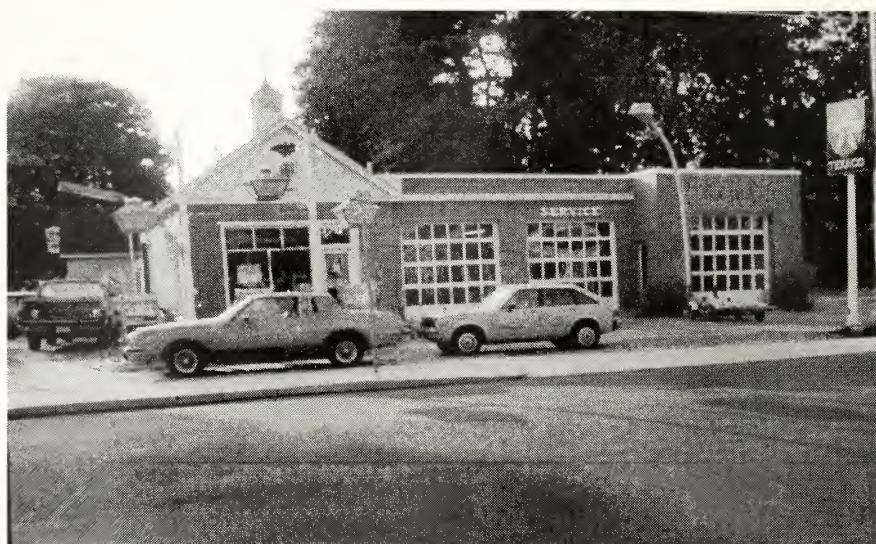
There was one drug store owned by Pete Giles sitting about where Cumberland Farms is. It had a full fledged, marble-topped soda fountain and a couple of tables with chairs. There was an apartment

\* On the east side of Main Street north of Central Street

and some kind of hall over it. It burned down in 1967.

Across the road where the salt box shaped office building now is, there was a row of small stucco stores with an apartment. These had been built on the site of the Grange Hall which burned in 1940.

There were gasoline stations on each corner of Central Street and John Gould had a working blacksmith shop on Central Street behind where the Beverly National Bank is now located.



**Garage at the southeast corner of Main and Central Streets**

The building that presently houses the Vernon Jordan real estate office, which was rehabbed by Cliff and Clayton Elliott in 1959, was a rather dilapidated store in 1950. It housed a barber shop, a restaurant, the Telephone Exchange, a grocery store and there was a bowling alley in the basement. The thrift shop was in a small building adjacent to the north.

Tony Gangi's grocery store was located where the present Fleet Bank office is located.\* In 1958 Gil's store was moved to its present

\* Sovereign Bank in 2008

site and Tony Gangi built the supermarket.\* Over the next several years he added the drug store, hardware store and other buildings that make up the shopping center.

Two two- family houses sat where the present post office is situated. Railroad tracks crossed Main Street just below Park Street. Passenger trains had stopped running in about 1948 but the tracks were still used to bring freight to the Co-op's storage sheds on Grove Street and it was not unusual to see a box car and sometimes a caboose sitting on the tracks beside the sheds.

On the south side of the tracks where Topsfield Crossing is now, there was a row of low buildings which included at one time or another - a log cabin, the bicycle shop, a printing press, and a small cafe run by Dick Crocker. These buildings were removed when Topsfield Crossing was built between 1982 and 1985.

By 1952, the Dutch Elm beetle had made its appearance in Topsfield and the elms began dying. At a special town meeting in November 1952, the town established a committee to look into the problem and report back. That committee reported at the 1953 Annual Meeting that of 2,026 elms lining the town's street, and not counting trees on private property, 134 showed symptoms of the disease and two had been killed and removed from the common.

In 1954 Hurricane Carol knocked down 17 elms and scattered the elm bark beetles throughout the town. From then on dead and dying elms were cut down and burned every year until they were practically all gone by the mid 1970s.

By 1956 the town had established a shade tree committee and commencing in that year, the committee planted sugar maples, Augustine elms, Christine Borsman elms, and other trees to replace the vanishing American elms.

\* Dawson Hardware in 2008

Any discussion of trees in Topsfield always brings to mind two individuals who have had a great deal to do with maintaining the rural look we all cherish in Topsfield.

John Nutter has been a member of the Tree Planning and Tree Planting committees of the town since they were created. He has been responsible for obtaining and handing out saplings to school children every Arbor Day and for most of the tree planting along our streets and around the common. As the chief advocate of shade trees, John has endeared himself to the town. \*

It seemed that every year from the 1960s through the 1970s and into the 1990s John and his committee would ask the Finance Committee to recommend a small allowance for tree planting. Invariably the Finance Committee would cut the request by \$500 or so at the annual town meeting and John would ask for recognition and ask that the Finance Committee's recommendation be increased to the amount originally requested and the town would vote John's motion. He never lost and after 10 or 15 years the Finance Committee would go along with John's original request.

The other person who comes to mind, of course, when trees are mentioned is Wallace Kneeland. In fact, Wallace comes to mind in connection with almost anything that happened in Topsfield between 1950 and 1986 when he died.

Over the years he was the Moth Warden, Tree Warden, a member of the Committee to Control the Dutch Elm Disease, a member of the Shade Tree Committee, the town Forest Committee, the Park Department, the Cemetery Commission, and a long time firefighter. Wally's plaid shirt and green work trousers were familiar to everyone and he was everyone's friend.

I am sure everybody has a Wally Kneeland story, probably several

\* Mr. Nutter died in a tragic accident on January 22, 2001

of them. My particular favorite concerns an annual town meeting in the late 1960s or early 1970s. The Finance Committee recommended "no action" over an article in the warrant to spend about \$4,500 to buy a "brush clipper" for the Park and Highway Departments. After some discussion in which there seemed to be some uncertainty as to just what a brush clipper was, the Finance Committee's "no action" recommendation was voted down, and someone then moved that the town appropriate the money for the brush clipper. Again, there was discussion pro and con about the purchase. Then Wally Kneeland asked to be recognized and for ten minutes held the town spellbound advocating the purchase. He seemingly took us on a tour of the town's highways and by-ways, pointing out where the machine would be useful. We went out Haverhill Street, down South Main Street, and at one point he seemed to have us in the widow Perkins' back pasture. When he finished, the auditorium was absolutely silent. Then Selma Williams rose and said, "I still don't know what a brush clipper is, but if Wally Kneeland is for it so am I". The crowd burst into spontaneous applause and the purchase was voted -- I think unanimously as the Finance Committee voted in favor.

Going back to the population explosion, in 1963 the Town Budget exceeded \$1 million for the first time, By 1965, the town had 4,375 residents. By 1970 it had 5,240. In the late 1970s it reached 5,900 and stayed close to that figure until recently when it went over 6,000.

By 1954 the town voted to add four more classrooms to the elementary school and a School Planning Committee recommended that the town join a regional High School District.

In 1956 the town voted to establish a regional school district with Boxford and Middleton. In 1957 an option on the land on Endicott Street in Boxford was purchased and the proposed school had been named Masconomet.

The elementary school population was exploding. In 1956 the Planning Board had before it 10 subdivisions with 115 lots being developed. And most of the new residents were married couples with elementary school age children.

In 1960 Mrs. Gilbert Steward offered to give the land on the east side of Perkins Row to the town for an elementary school. The Steward School opened in early 1963. By then the elementary school population, which had been 222 in 1950, had jumped to 830.

In 1960 the town bought a new station wagon which became the first police cruiser. The annual budget was \$678,299.91 and the Planning Board had 14 subdivision proposals covering 350 acres under consideration.

In 1963 work began on a junior high school wing, a field house, and a cafeteria at Masconomet and the Junior High School classrooms were occupied in September, 1964.

In 1970 a seven classroom addition to the Steward school was complete and work was under way to complete an addition to the Junior High School at Masconomet.

Since 1959 there have been three attempts to regionalize grades K through 6 and all have failed.

I mentioned earlier that in 1950 there was no full time police department. On April 6, 1961 the Police Chief, Bill Peabody, went on full time duty but the police still had no office. The state police lock-up at the barracks on Route 1 was used when necessary.

By 1966 there were four full time police officers and the town provided space and facilities for a 24 hour Emergency Center for all the departments in the Town Hall. At about the same time, the police department occupied one room in the Town Hall with a closet that served as a chief's office. It continued to operate in that

restricted space until the mid 1980s when the state police abandoned their barracks on Route 1 and the town took the building over as a police and emergency communications center.

The fire department was located in what is now the Highway Garage. In 1969 the town voted to build the present fire station on High Street and the fire department moved there in 1970.

Speaking of Hood's Pond, one of the finest eating places north of Boston, Jack Hacket's, was on Pond Street just over the line in Ipswich until it burned in the early 1970s

The town dump was a social center on Saturdays and Sundays during its early years. In 1956 the Selectmen proposed rules for its operation. It was to be open from 10:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. Wednesdays through Sundays. It was to be used for brush, wood and other refuse - but no garbage. A pig farmer made the rounds in town to pick up the garbage that the raccoons didn't get. The dump officer was in charge of operations and he had salvage rights. Wally was the dump officer for a good part of the time, and it used to be a family excursion to load up the car with barrels of trash and kids and drive to the dump and socialize with Wallace and your neighbors and friends while you emptied the barrels and your kids scrounged around for broken toys. Sometimes you came back with almost as much as you took and you frequently stopped at Bob Bishop's store for penny candy after you left the dump.

By 1968 the dump had become a nuisance. There were repetitive fires, there was fear of water pollution, and there was an unhealthy population of rats. And the Selectmen were looking for another site and preparing to close the old one. In 1966 the town voted to acquire a new dump site and in 1968 the State ordered us to close the dump. For a while the town operated a small, closed land-fill next to the old dump and the days of week-end socializing at the dump were over as we went to curb side pick up in 1969. In 1990 the town

acquired land off Haverhill Street and it became the site of the present land-fill.

The town started recycling glass, cans and newspapers in 1971, at first beside the highway department building, later at the Co-Op, and now with curb-side pickup.

In 1974 the Housing Authority started work funded by the State to construct 60 units of Elderly Housing at Littlebrook Village.

In 1975 the town celebrated its 325th anniversary with a costume ball, a community day at the fairgrounds, a tri-town symphony concert, a square dance festival, and a reenactment of the 1775 muster of the militia and its departure for Lexington and Concord performed by the Boy Scouts. There was also a reenactment of the 19th century performance of "Ten Nights in a Bar Room" by the Village Players. Again, the chairman of the Committee in charge of the celebration was Curtis Campbell.

The Topsfield Common was entered in the National Register of Historic Places in 1976.

1978 was the year of the blizzard. It snowed around the clock for three days and we all discovered we could walk downtown and socialize with our neighbors en route. We must have had more than one power line serving the town by then, because as I remember it we never lost power during the storm or for the several days afterward when the roads were closed. Prior to that we had one power line that came down the old railroad right of way from Boxford and we seemed to have blackouts every time we had a thunderstorm.

In 1978 a Downtown Study Committee was established and over the next ten years it planned and executed a master plan which resulted in the widening of Main Street, the reconstruction of sidewalks, the

relocation of the utility lines, and the elimination of the railroad tracks.

In 1984 the town voted to lease computers for use in the Town Hall. In 1985 Cable TV came to Topsfield. In 1986 the handicapped access ramp was installed at the Town Hall.

In 1987 the town established a full time fire chief and two full time firefighters. The department had been all volunteer until then.

It seems to me that there were more town-wide social events in the 1960s and 1970s. The Congregational Church and St. Rose both sponsored public dances. There was an annual Fireman's Ball and the Historical Society held a dance every fall.

Incidentally, there are now four churches in town. Trinity Episcopal Church was built in 1957; the Lutheran church in 1961. A Baptist church existed for a few years after 1986.

People from Topsfield have participated in three wars since 1950; the Korean War, Vietnam, and Desert Storm. To the best of my knowledge there has been only one fatality, and that was a Naval Aviator named John Lawson who died in Vietnam.

Finally the 1990s have been marked by the construction of the Gould Barn which has become a major asset of the town and of the Historical Society.

The town budget for fiscal year 1999 was \$7,934,522.00.

Now I know that I have left out a lot of things. For example I haven't mentioned Maryknoll or the Nike Site, but I leave them and anything else you want to discuss for you to raise.

*Students in Mr. Jervah's American Civics course at Masconomet High School interviewed several residents in town in January, 1970 in order to write papers on Topsfield in the great depression of the 1930s. The interview with Mrs. Evelyn Fales by students Nancy Campbell and Douglas Depouy and the papers written by Nancy and Douglas are on file in the Historical Society's Record Room. Both Nancy and Douglas received A's for their work. Mrs. Fales lived in town all her life and was a long-time member of the Society. She died in 1991. The Evelyn Fales interview is reproduced here.*

**DEPRESSION YEARS IN TOPSFIELD** Interview with Evelyn Fales January 16, 1970

A map available at the library (in 1970) shows the twelve estates in town at the time when I was growing up through most of the Depression. Each employed perhaps five or six homes full of people. For example, the Lawrence farm had a groomsman for the horses; a cowman for the cows; a chicken man, a chauffeur; a gardener; a florist; etc. They all had their own cottages where they raised their own families. The florist usually brought flowers to the church every week. (We didn't have a Flower Committee in those days.) So, in each one of these cottages, the man worked for the rich man, and sometimes the worker's wife would do the cooking and baby-sitting for the landlord, as well as raising her own family. The estate gardener would bring vegetables round to all the other farm workers, and the milkman, with an extra gallon, would take care of the milk for the children down the road apiece. Really because of the estates, Topsfield wasn't drastically affected at all during the Depression.

Question: "They were all self-dependent?"    Answer : "Yes."

My father worked over at Wheatland's farm.. You know where Chet Humphrey lives now, up the hill on Salem Street? We lived in the big farmhouse next to Chet Humphrey, after the Turnpike. My father went there in 1927, so we didn't have any problem. (Incidentally, I was married in 1930.) There were cows and horses on the farm, but my mother, of course, had to do all the work involved with the men who worked there.

About everyone in town worked for someone. We didn't have "occupations". My best friend's father was a carpenter. He restored the Parson Capen House. He was a very well known carpenter who hired maybe eight or ten men. But the carpenters were affected by the Depression because people were not building new houses.

The rich men did not have on their staff what we call a maintenance man, but they would hire a carpenter to tear down a pig shed or build up a hen coop, or something like that. So, the carpenters worked in the summer during the Depression, but in winter, they worked for the farms, as did a lot of people.

My friend in Quincy spoke to me about it the other day. She said she could remember that after her husband got laid off working for her father, who was a Topsfield carpenter at that time, that Lloyd (her husband) got 50 cents an hour, no overtime or double time. Night and day, any of the twenty-four hours, they received 50 cents an hour. And they thought they were rich. Literally, they used to praise the job.

When my husband got laid off, he worked at the cemetery for 50 cents an hour for two days. That was \$9.00. As you know, he's not a manual worker. He's a banker and has always worked with books. When he came home and handed me \$9.00, I looked at his hands all

blistered from working. I loved him forever after that, to think what he would do for me.

Q: "Did some people work out of town? Were there jobs around?"

Most of them worked in the leather factories. Danvers, Peabody, and Salem were full of small leather factories. When they did get laid off, they worked for the town, cleaning up sides of roads, etc. For the \$3 or \$4 an hour road workers now get, they got 50 cents an hour.

Then, the trains. Were the trains running? Oh, yes, they didn't quit. There were many, many trains every day. So, if people were lucky enough to afford the train fare, they could keep going at an out-of-town job, or looking for one. My husband worked in Boston. The job he was laid off from was with an insurance company. It was a big company, but they were kind of pulling in their belts. He used to ride into Boston from here, through Danvers, Peabody, Wakefield, Lynnfield and Brighton. North of here, the trains went through Georgetown and Newburyport, eventually ending up in Maine.

The businesses in town were very few and all in the middle of town. There was one gas station, three stores, a plumber, one insurance man, and (this I gloat over) no real estate office. The Essex County Co-op hired several men. That's one of the biggest businesses Topsfield's ever had, a million dollars plus. There was no bank; but a carpenter's place; Connelly's Sand & Gravel Company; and a shoe repair shop right in the middle of town (Where Rosenkrantz is now), where we had our shoes cobbled for 50 cents. Then we had a butcher. We didn't call them meat markets, they were the butchers. He would have meat hanging out back and go there to cut it off for you. These shops might employ two or three men. The grocery store hired from four to five men.

Q: "Are prices in the grocery store much greater and were there fewer items?"

While I was growing up before the Depression, say from 1920-1930, Topsfield was a poor town and it always was. During that time, prices didn't get any higher so I know the price of some of the things. The best roast beef you could get was 25 cents a pound. I can remember we had company one Sunday, and Les said "What are you going to have for dinner?" I said I was going to price the roast beef. But it was too high. Hamburger was two pounds for 25 cents. Sirloin steak, boneless, went for 35 cents; eggs were 20 cents; and I imagine milk was about a dime.

Of course, those were the days before fuel oil. Everybody used coal or wood in their furnaces. Incidentally, most poor people in town, including my folks, who were poor, believe me, had gardens where they raised their own vegetables, and they had wood lots. They could go up to the other end of town and chop their wood if they couldn't afford coal. Many families had small gravel pits out back. They would sell the gravel to the town and make a little money that way. Practically everyone had at least one cow and a bunch of chickens. So they had milk, eggs, and fowl, and nobody starved. We managed with what we had and made do. We just made sure that everyone was taken care of.

I went through the records of Public Welfare, which was called the Poor and Charity then. In 1929, Topsfield spent \$2220. My grandmother collected something like \$10 a month from it, and you would have thought she was asking for charity. In those days, there was no Social Security or other socialized agencies. If you had no money, you had to apply for assistance. From that 1929 cost of welfare (\$2,220), the figure rose by 1937 to \$8,400. That's eight years. By 1939, it was up to \$18,000. That included old age assistance and the food, fuel, and clothing given to people who were hardup. Between 1939 and 1940, the cost went down. I think because the government knew there was a war coming. They had

started defense work. The shipyards in Quincy had started up and many people left their common little makeshift jobs to work in defense plants where they could earn \$100 to \$125 a week. They thought they were millionaires. As a matter of fact, I was jealous because my husband had never learned to hammer a nail.

The Board of Public Welfare gave out food and coal slips. If you didn't have the money and needed coal, you applied for a coal slip. My cousin's husband went to the house of a member of the Board when he had no money for coal. He drove there in his car, which was essential to have in those days if you worked out of town. He was asked how he got there. When he replied he drove, he was turned away without the slip. A month later, he walked up Summer hill to ask for the coal slip. That time, when he was asked how he got there and said he walked, he got the slip. With the food slips, you could go to the grocery store and get \$5 worth of groceries every other week, or whatever the Public Welfare felt like giving you. They didn't listen to any excuses. You had to tell them the truth. And that was it.

Q: "Is this how the majority lived?" A "No."

I still think the majority of people worked on the estates or farms. After them came the carpenters. In 1929, there were 348 men in town over 21. That isn't very many, of course. Many of them worked on estates. Many of them were old, over 65, even 75. Some were physically unable or sick.

In those days, if people lived in Topsfield for so many years and then moved away, Topsfield was responsible for them. For instance, if 15 people in 5 years moved from Topsfield to Salem, Topsfield was responsible for their public welfare. They have changed all that now, of course.

You can see that Public Welfare declined just about the time defense work started up in 1940, for by that time the clothing mills in Salem were going strong, along with shoe factories and General Electric. Then there was no Sylvania, no Bell Labs, Avco, etc. But G.E. was going strong. They had a terrible time during the Depression and had to lay off most of their employees. If you think that this last strike was bad, you should have seen GE then.

You have probably come across the projects. W.P.A.--that was Works Progress Administration; then is changed to P.W.A., Public Works Administration; later it was know as Civil Works Administration. The P.W.A. put unemployed writers and artists to work. We had writers and researchers working at the Library on historical records. A group of them wrote a history of Essex County.

Comment: "Then, of course, the Library was built partly with P.W.A. funds"

Comment: "Yes, sir. If that library were to be built today, it would cost four times what it did then."

In those days, working on the roads and for the town was a godsend. Many extra workers were put on to build roads and bridges. They built Balch's bridge in 1935. That would never have been done otherwise. Just beyond the cemetery, on the same side, two cement posts mark Bare Hill Park. That was built with Federal funds. Everyone said it was just a bunch of foolishness, that "nobody will ever use it for a park, stuck away up there", but I understand the Boy Scouts use it. Well, it cost thousands of dollars, but the government spent it to give work, and it worked out all right. They painted the Town Hall and built tennis courts at school where the parking lot now is located, on the left. That was after Proctor School was built. Another project financed by Federal funds was cleaning up the damage done to the cemetery after the 1938 hurricane.

The C.C.C., which stands for Civilian Conservation Corps, paid young men who couldn't get jobs to cut down trees. These young men and boys who had practically no education or skills lived in camps in the woods and were paid \$25 a month and their keep. Twenty dollars of that was mailed to the parents. The youths were allowed \$5 to pay for laundry and other expenses.

In 1929, as I said before, there were 348 men over 21 in town, living in 324 homes. There was almost one home for each man, which is unusual. In 1932, there were 573 automobiles here. Thereafter, they stopped putting that information in the Town Report; so I can't tell you how many people may have later lost their cars because they couldn't keep up the payments.

People lost their houses. That was the time my father had \$400 in the bank. Roosevelt was President and declared a bank moratorium. Many of the banks never could open again. My father lost the \$400 deposit and went broke. At the time the banks closed, Mr. Roberts, the Town Treasurer, couldn't get any money to pay the town employees. Well, that meant that some people would starve. So he went to Boston to a bank that he knew and got \$1,000, which he carried home with him on the train to pay the town employees.

You might be interested in the salaries paid at that time. Mr. Pethybridge who was Principal of the old Academy, taught two subjects at a yearly salary of \$2,700 from 1928 to 1930. He got a raise in 1931 to \$2,750 but in 1932 he went back to \$2,650, and that was where he stayed, through 1936 anyway. From that time on, they stopped putting salaries in the Town Report. The highest paid teacher in 1929 received \$1,700. She too had to take a cut in 1932 to \$1,500. And that was what she was paid in 1936. Poor old soul, she is in a rest home down in Hyannis. Now her old school pupils are trying to do something for her. She's on public welfare.

Q: "How was that for salary?"      A: "They thought it was good, but it probably was a little tight when they got cut."

That figure of 324 homes in 1929 didn't vary much. By 1940, the total number was 336. You can see how little building there was in those eleven years. Incidentally, there are 1,231 homes in Topsfield now.

In 1940, this I know, we paid the minister \$25 a week. He had three children, and we gave him a parsonage. But, believe me, it wasn't the nice place it is now. I had a baby in 1930 at a cost of \$4 a day for the hospital and \$60 for the doctor. Last year, Les and I were in the hospital at the same time. We paid \$67 each per day for the hospital.

My father, even before the Depression, earned \$48 a week, he and his two horses. That was considered pretty darn good, 50 cents per hour for him and 50 cents for his two horses. If one horse got sick and he couldn't take it out, he earned darned little.

In 1930, the population was 930; in 1960, 1,409. That shows how little the town grew in thirty years. But in the six years from 1960 to 1966, it went up to 4,375, a big jump.

My daughter was in the first graduating class of Masconomet. She started school in the original Proctor School which had none of its later additions. She began in one room and just kept going upstairs, and graduated from there, too.

In 1942 (This had nothing to do with the Depression), everyone knew there was going to be a war. Civil Defense, the State Guard, rationing, and defense work were all in full swing. So by that time, to my mind, the town had prospered. Like other white collar workers, my husband didn't earn any more, but lots of people did. Many townspeople were employed constructing sidewalks, fixing drains, etc.

Q: "There was still a lot of unemployment in 1941?"

Yes, if it hadn't been for the war, the Depression would have kept right on. That's why in 1940 and 1941 things began to pick up a little bit. The people started to work at the shipyards and made good wages. The business men were very lenient. You didn't get an IBM card saying "You owe us \$413", or something like that. I can remember my father getting a bill from the plumber for something like \$150 for work done on the old place when the furnace blew up. Very lenient, our small town looked out and really cared for all its people.

You asked previously about the rich people and how they were affected. They may have pulled in their belts a little bit, but nobody jumped out of a window.

Q: "What did you do in your spare time?"

During the Depression, we still had fun. We went over to our neighbors and played cards. We had plays at the Town Hall, which was always the social center of the town. Dances there too. The firemen and the policemen and other groups had dances. There were church gatherings: socials, church suppers, box parties, and things like that. I remember going to a friend's house during that time. Four or five couples, perhaps, would chip in 50 cents and we would live high, wide and handsome on lobster, steamed clams, and four or five bottles of beer. Have a wonderful time. Nowadays, I don't even look at lobster--can't afford it.

Q: "You were telling us earlier a bit about Proctor's giving the town land for the school?"

He had said he would give a brand new school to Topsfield. This was before the Depression, in 1927 or 28. Mr. Proctor said he would get plans drawn up, which he did. There's a picture of the architect's drawings. But the town wouldn't take the school and declined the offer, didn't want any strings attached . You don't want to take something and have someone tell you how you'll fix it. And,

you don't want to take something for nothing, anyway. By then, he was really pulling in his horns a little bit. So, by the time the town had decided to take it, all he could afford was the land. Eight acres of good land. Townspeople ended up saying "Proctor's land" and found it just as easy saying "Proctor School", so Proctor School it became.

Mr. Proctor hired a large and varied crew of workers. Nowadays, you might call some of them no-good middle class. Of course, my father was one of eight children. They were all horse traders. And you never made any money being a horse trader, trying always to gyp the next guy before he gyped you.

When Mr. Proctor built up that estate, he had men brought over from Italy who knew about everything he wanted done. They were noted for having "green thumbs" and hand-picked practically every weed. Tony Gangi's father was one, though he worked at the neighboring Penticost estate (later Maryknoll).

Five thousand acres (with the many houses there) belonged to Mr. Proctor. This included all the property from way over to Steward School; all of Perkins Row; the land in Topsfield now owned by Audubon Society's Wildlife Sanctuary; and all the way out to town by way of Howlett Street. He imported trees, shrubs, and plants from all over, even China. Every item was cataloged, cross-referenced, and notes added as to whether it might be expected to live or die. Every planting was tagged, tended, and watched for growth. It was really something. I can't think of anything else. But I do say that, during the Depression, it was because of the estates and the town and its people looking out for their own (with some few odd jobs) that people got along. Nobody starved.

*In the early days of Topsfield the Averill family lived in the area that is now the Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary. Mr. MacDougall presented this paper to a Topsfield men's discussion group.*

## THE COLLEGES OF TOPSFIELD

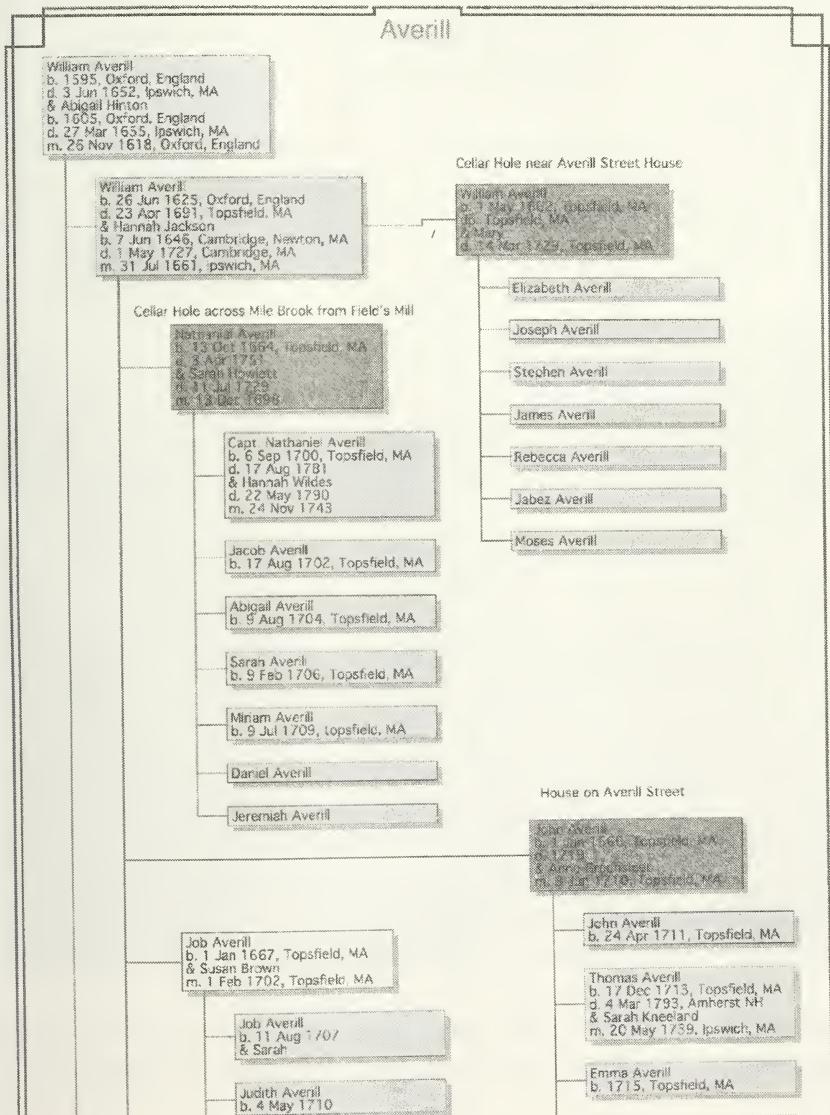
By James MacDougall

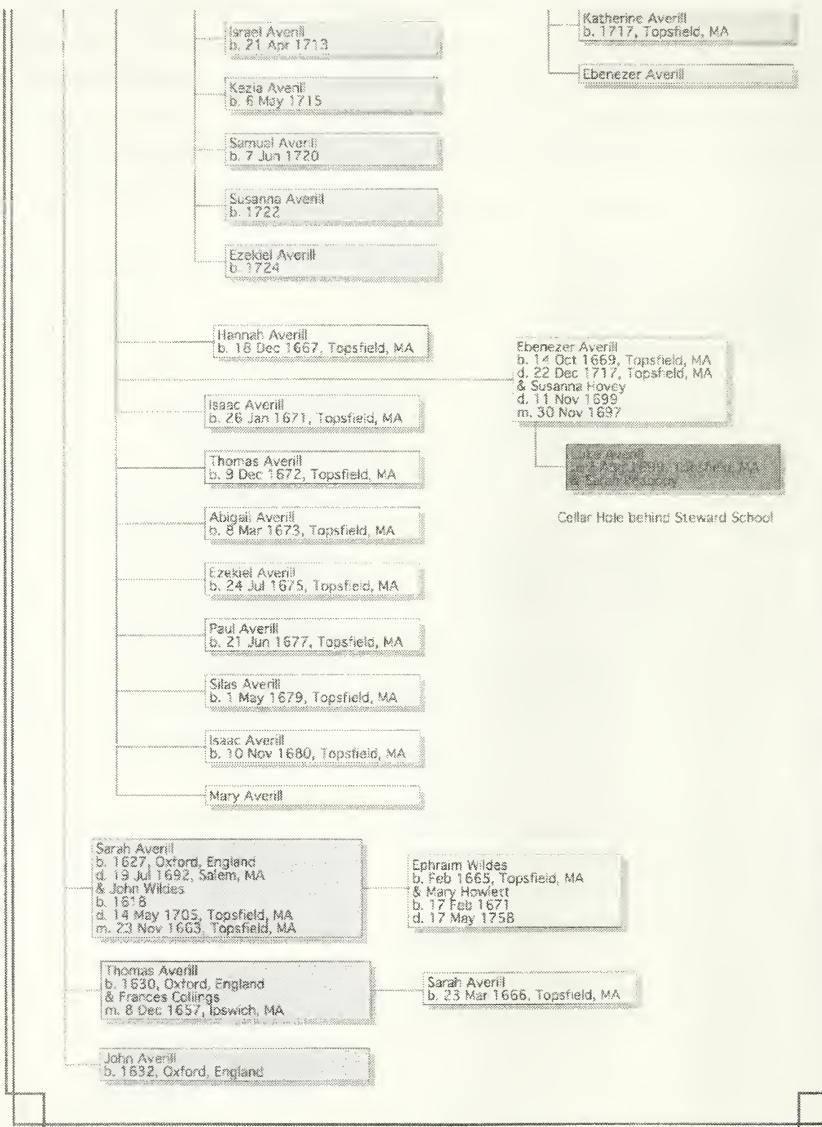
In Lawrence Bond's book *The Houses and Buildings of Topsfield, Massachusetts*, he refers to the Averill houses that were located off of Perkins Row without much detail<sup>1</sup>. It is my intent to add detail to this ghost town within a town that is known as the Colleges.

The Colleges of Topsfield are located wholly within Massachusetts Audubon's Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary and in the land owned by Lawrence Coolidge on Perkins Row. The Colleges, as named by early inhabitants of Topsfield, is the Averill family settlement of New Meadows beginning in 1667 and remained active up to 1820 when the colony began to decline. The last building burned down in 1891. There exist 6 cellar holes where houses once stood and the mill site is occupied by a relatively contemporary cottage, post 1891.

William Averill, born in Oxford, England, landed in Ipswich around 1637 with his wife, Abigail Hinton and six of their children. In 1663,<sup>2</sup> William's son William Averill moved his family to "New Meadows" or Topsfield and bought 100 acres south of the Boardman farm and west of the Perkins' Mill on Mile Brook. The house is no longer standing and I have yet to locate the cellar hole which is on the north end of Averill Street and across the street from his son, John's house which is still standing at 19 Averill Street. William's sister Sarah married John Wildes and was later hanged as a witch during the Witch Trials of Salem. Her son Ephraim was the local constable and he would not bring her to trial. He testified on her behalf at the trial to no avail.

The Averills were one of the few families in town that received a newspaper and that maintained an extensive library. The term "Colleges" reflects the respect bestowed upon the Averills for their intellect and industry by their contemporaries. There are many accounts of people in Topsfield traveling to the Colleges to gain





### Averill Family Genealogy

advice on an issue of the day. This story is covered in many histories of Topsfield and it is not my intention to repeat it here.

See S. Gertrude Bradstreet's account *The Cradle of the Averill Family.*<sup>3</sup>

As with any fertile family in New England, it is easy to look back in time and become confused by the reuse of given names in subsequent generations. In this case, William is used for many generations after the first and it becomes difficult to keep track of them without a system. I used the "Genealogy of the Averills" from the 1900 edition of the Essex Antiquarian. I entered the information in to a genealogical software database to develop the descendent chart to keep the family history organized. Many of the Averills remained in Topsfield but others moved to Middleton and beyond. I have done my best to locate the cellar holes within the Colleges and attribute them to the appropriate owners.



*Nathaniel Averill Cellar Hole circa 1693, photographed 2008*

There are six cellar holes that are obvious in addition to the site of the saw mill which is occupied by a cottage presumably built by Thomas Proctor and which shows on a plan drafted in 1947. The oldest cellar hole is that of Nathaniel Averill and his wife, Sarah Howlett. Nathaniel established the second mill in Topsfield in 1693 on Mile Brook and built his house across the brook at the toe of an esker. The cellar hole is in a grove of locust trees. The hole, chimney base and a nearby depression, possibly making the outhouse or well, are all very evident. Black locust trees may have been planted near houses in colonial times to redirect lighting away from buildings. All of the cellar holes within the Colleges are surrounded by Black Locust trees and including the Bradstreet cellar hole south of the Colleges.



**Location of the Averill houses in the Ipswich River Sanctuary area**

The Nathaniel Averill cellar hole measures approximately 40 feet by 18 feet. Its long side is oriented to the south-southeast. The Daniel Averill is similarly sized and situated as is the Luke Averill

Cellar hole. The later also has an obvious interior wall in the northeast corner which may be a root cellar. The cellar holes for the Jacob, Solomon Averill and Granny Averill Bickford are all small and approximately 15 feet by 15 feet. The Solomon and Jacob Averill houses still exist in other parts of town and their exact measurements can be acquired directly.

References:

1. C. Lawrence Bond, *Houses and Buildings of Topsfield, Massachusetts* page 190.
2. The Essex Antiquarian, Volume IV. Salem, MA, September 1900. No. 9. *Averill Genealogy*
3. J.H. Towne, *The Houses and Buildings of Topsfield, Massachusetts* 1902, page 84.

*The greatest impact on the area now owned by the Massachusetts Audubon Society was that of Thomas E. Proctor. He began purchasing land in Topsfield in 1898 and at the time of his death in 1949 owned 47% of all the land in Topsfield. C. Lawrence Bond wrote an article describing Mr. Proctor's doings in Topsfield in Volume XXXII of the Topsfield Historical Society Collections in 1974. This brief summary is taken from an unpublished work by Mark Lapin, re-edited in 1997, who based much of his work on the Bond article.*

## **BRIEF HISTORY OF THE IPSWICH RIVER WILDLIFE SANCTURY**



**Bradstreet farm house**

When Mr. Proctor's father died he and his mother moved from their Boston residence to the Bradstreet farm house, the present Audubon headquarters building. When his mother died he moved

again to a house on Perkins Row, no longer existing, to be closer to his greenhouses. He never married. Proctor's legacy included the once-impressive arboretum on Bradstreet Hill, greenhouses, polo fields, a public water supply system in use until at least 1973, and the Rockery.

Proctor inherited his wealth from his father whose fortune was presumably made in the leather importing business. Although he never worked in the family business, Proctor retained an office in Boston and traded stocks and bonds. He remained a bachelor throughout his life, and his real passion was horticulture. Besides his interest in the perennials that he planted on Bradstreet Hill, he studied orchids in his greenhouses which were located west of Perkins Row slightly north of Bradstreet Lane.

The labor force required to create the roads, arboretum, polo fields, and Rockery, and to maintain a large estate, was primarily supplied by Italian immigrants. Proctor is reported to have been moderately



Some of Mr. Proctor's immigrant workers

generous and a kind man to his employees. It is reported that in the early days, anyone who worked there was given a bicycle; when anyone got to the point where he could afford a "Model T", Tom had a garage built for him. In the end everyone who had been employed for two years received \$500 and some of those who had been with him for long periods received \$ 100 for each year of service.



**The Rockery under construction**

The arboretum and Rockery were begun in 1902 with the advice of Professor John George Jack, first Professor of Dendrology at Harvard University. A Japanese landscape architect, Shintare Anamete, was hired to design and oversee construction of the Rockery and the Japanese garden at the site of the now abandoned wildflower garden.

The construction of the Rockery and the arboretum road were very labor-intensive, although no reports of an actual number of laborers were uncovered. The Rockery was completed in nine years, with the sweat of many men and mules hauling boulders

from Byfield and Rowley (a two-plus day trip with a big rock) and positioning them just so in the Rockery.

During the early winter, flatcar loads of exotic oriental shrubs and trees arrived at the Topsfield Railroad station and were carried to the Proctor estate. The ground had been readied for them, with loads of salt marsh hay having been spread as mulch. This was burned; the frost was thawed by the heat and a great planting took place.

Proctor was an acquaintance of Charles Sprague Sargent, Director of the Arnold Arboretum and one of the most knowledgeable tree experts ever. Sargent helped finance the expeditions of Ernest (Chinese) Wilson to the Far East. Thus Proctor received many collected specimens and planted them on Bradstreet Hill and in the Rockery. Apparently one of his goals was to plant a specimen of every hardy North American tree on his estate. Proctor himself traveled to Mexico and the Amazon searching for exotic plants.

He planted an unknown number of species, varieties, and cultivars of trees and shrubs on his estate. The privately-published *Catalogue of Trees and Shrubs*, often thought to be a list of Proctor's plantings, was in fact compiled by Professor Jack as a list of species and varieties described in Koehne's *Deutsche Dendrologie* and printed as the basis for the arboretum. That is, the "Catalogue" is a list of plants that could potentially be planted, and not a list of the actual plantings. Unfortunately, Proctor left no arboretum documentation, no records of how many specimens were planted, planting locations, or planting survival.

On a personal note, Proctor enjoyed displaying his pursuits to the public. The estate was open on the weekends to recreators traveling on foot, horseback, or by carriage, and he even hired someone to drive people around Arboretum Road to see his growing arboretum. Proctor himself proudly rode atop a horse surveying his grounds and monuments. Generous with his wealth, he owned a special truck that was used year round to make daily

deliveries of flowers and plants from his greenhouses to friends and relatives in Boston. His niece remembered him as a perfect gentleman, generous and devoted in all his cultural and philanthropic endeavors. For his family and friends he shared his trotters and buggies to race down the old deserted Hamilton-Wenham-Essex Railroad bed. He provided food and canoes for Ipswich River picnics; ice boats to speed over the frozen marshes; snowshoes and cook-outs for long winter hikes through the woods; huts for protection while fishing through the ice; shelters, grain, and hay for the wildlife; pails for collecting maple syrup.

Thomas Proctor certainly left his mark on Topsfield. When he died, he left no bequests to charitable organizations. Massachusetts Audubon Society bought the bulk of the Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary from the Proctor Estate for \$50,000. In the early years of the sanctuary, director Elmer Foye devoted much energy to maintaining the Proctor arboretum as a managed landscape. When directorship and conservationist attitudes toward landscapes changed, the arboretum was left to grow wild. In scattered spots around the hill and at the Rockery, one can stumble upon some very interesting, often confounding, exotic plants. Fortunately, Proctor's manipulations on the present sanctuary lands other than Bradstreet Hill were kept to a minimum, for he is said to have enjoyed the native forest as much as his cherished specimen trees.

1994 was the bicentennial year for the Topsfield Town Library and an audio-visual program was prepared to celebrate the event. A few years later the library underwent a major reconstruction after which the presentation was modified to include the changes. The revised program was shown for several days in 1999. The text of that presentation, along with a few pictures, is reproduced in the following article.

## **HISTORY OF THE TOPSFIELD TOWN LIBRARY**

By Jan Jansen

The Topsfield Library Society was founded on March 20, 1794 under the leadership of Reverend Asabel Huntington, pastor of the Congregational Church. Each member of the new Society was assessed 20 shillings for the purchase of books. It was agreed to keep the Library within one mile of the 1759 Meeting House, and to have it open one afternoon a month for the circulation of books. There were 80 original members including 3 women. One curious provision in the by-laws was that books had to be taken out in alphabetical order and that a requested book should always go to the highest bidder present. 67 volumes were purchased as follows: 20 history, 13 religion, 15 travel, 10 literature, 2 biography, 1 agriculture, and 6 philosophy. A bookcase was purchased in 1796 along with leather to cover the books. From 1973 to 1999 the bookcase and the books were kept in an upstairs room at the Parson Capen House. They are now on display in the Library.

The Library was incorporated in 1805 and the by-laws were revised. In those days the bookcase and its contents were kept at the home of the librarian.

Mr. Huntington died in 1813 and without his active influence, interest in the library waned. There were no Library meetings between 1814 and 1824 and the membership dwindled to 15 proprietors. Then interest in the Library was rekindled by



The original books in the 1796 bookcase

Rev. Rodney Dennis of the Congregational Church. For the next few years the bookcase was kept at 40 South Main Street and then at 11 Prospect Street.

In those days it was hard to sustain interest and several attempts were made to sell the collection, although not carried out. In 1854 when the Topsfield Academy was flourishing, the Library was transferred there. During the next decade or two, parallel efforts to create libraries were made by groups interested in agriculture, the local schools, the Topsfield Athenaeum Association, and the Ladies Society of the Congregational Church.

Finally, in 1875, a meeting was convened to establish a Free Town Library. The effort was spearheaded by Messrs Todd, Merriam, Allen, Balch, Fitts, and Rev. Anson McLoud, a long time distinguished minister of the Congregational Church. The several groups contributed their books to the new organization and monetary gifts were received as well. 7700 books circulated among 243 borrowers in the first year of operations. Mr. Sidney A. Merriam deserves much credit for this success, and his death the next year, in 1876, was a severe blow. He endowed the library

with \$1000. Rev. McLoud's personal library was given to the Town Library in 1885 to become the McLoud Department. By 1906, however, the McLoud books constituted only 1/2 percent of the library's circulation of about 5,200 books.

The new Library was housed in the newly completed Town Hall in the room that now serves as the Clerk's Office. The first paid librarian was Miss Victoria Reed and she earned \$50 a year. After a while this room was required by the Selectmen and the Library was moved to the southwest corner of the building where the Selectmen now meet. The Library remained here until 1935.

Some of the Library problems during the Town Hall years had a familiar ring. For example, the 1906 report of the Trustees included the following: "The last two years the Town has not seen fit, without a special appropriation, to pay for the services of the janitor who has the care of the library room. It seems reasonable and right that the Town be responsible for that item, rather than to have it paid from the funds of the library. It may be said further that it is doubtful whether the income of the funds can be legally used for any other purpose than the purchase of books."

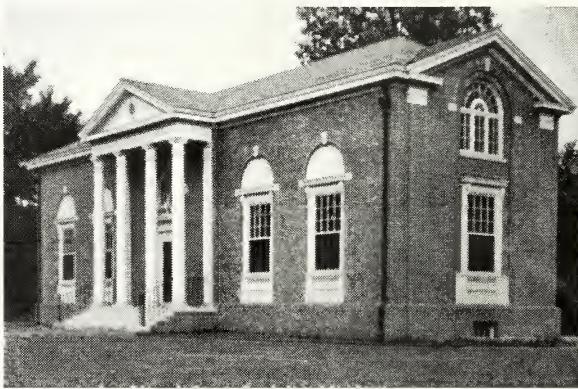
Land for a new building was bought by the Town in 1912 from George Francis Dow, but funding problems delayed the project for some 20 years. A bequest of \$15,000 was received from David Pingree, along with smaller sums from other donors. Then a grant of about \$10,500 under the National Recovery Act sponsored by the Roosevelt Administration finally made it possible to proceed with construction. The building was designed by Harold Field Kellogg, a young Boston architect, with Mr. Balch and George Francis Dow serving as his consultants.



Mr. Dow

When the project was completed the Town owned a handsome library building located in the very heart of the community. These photographs were taken at Mr. Dow's request on August 28, 1935. The front door opened to an attractive entrance hall containing the librarian's desk, files, and bookcases. A series of murals portraying life in colonial Topsfield, painted by Mr. Kellogg, graced the walls on three sides. To the right of the entrance door was a well appointed reading room. Crossing over to the other side of the building we find ourselves in a room lined with bookcases.

The Topsfield Room was upstairs over the reading room. Here were housed the 1794 bookcase, a model of the 1759 Meeting House, a model of the Capen House, and other items of historical interest. The other upstairs room was essentially an art gallery.



The Library in 1935



The Topsfield Room

In the late 1940's and in the 50's, after WWII, like so many other towns, Topsfield began to grow. This affected the Library, and in 1964 an architect was retained to redesign the basement for use as a Children's Room. Since that time a Children's Librarian has conducted regular programs for children.

In 1964 the reading rooms were air-conditioned and the Friends of the Library Group was formally organized. This Group has been of great value to the Library by providing passes to Boston museums, organizing all sorts of programs, and providing financial assistance to accomplish many worthwhile purposes.

1972 and 1973 were critical years. An expansion of the Library was needed and at the same time use of the upstairs rooms had to be curtailed to comply with new safety regulations. A fire escape was required and the load-bearing capability of the second floor was deemed to be inadequate. \$27,000 was voted for a study at a special Town Meeting. The construction bid to accomplish the resulting plan came to \$350,000, however, and was rejected as



**Exterior appearance of the Library following 1973 change**

as being too expensive. A less ambitious program to renovate the Library for \$155,000 was voted by the Town. That decision placed

growth limitations on the Library, however, and resulted in further expansion needs almost before the 1973 renovations were completed.

The work was done in 1973 while the Library again operated out of the Town Hall for several months. The second floor was reinforced and handicapped entrance facilities were provided. The two upstairs rooms were converted to stacks and a storage area was made into a gallery. Most of the items of historical interest, including the 1794 bookcase and its contents, were moved to the Capen House. 600 people came to the open house held on January 21, 1974 when the Library was reopened.

The upstairs stacks, along with the stacks found downstairs behind the Circulation Desk provided space for thousands of books stored in a well-ordered fashion. But in 1981 the Building Inspector found that more repairs were essential. So, among other things, the front steps were rebuilt. Along with this work, some very attractive plantings were introduced at the front of the building.



**Painting of old Topsfield by Richard Wyman**

From the very beginning the new building was more than a place devoted only to books. The murals in the Entrance Hall and the paintings upstairs testify to that. The completion of the Gallery made possible an ever expanding series of many different cultural

programs. Each year sees several exhibitions of paintings, many by local artists. There have been exhibits by potters, by wood carvers, and sculptures. There have been lectures on music, on literature, and poetry readings. There have been slide presentations on nature and local history. Paintings are on display in many parts of the building, such as the painting of old Topsfield by Richard Wyman, that hung for many years in the Family Bank.

The reference room housed most of the modern equipment used by the Library and its patrons. Two CD-ROM equipped computers were available where one could access all kinds of information, such as complete texts of many magazines not found in the reading room. There was also a fax-machine.

Current magazines and new books were on display in the Reading Room. Patrons could browse new volumes before deciding what books to read. A very popular area was the collection of videos that could be borrowed. A microfilm reader was available in the upstairs stacks where over 20 years of the Tri-Town Transcript could be read.

The Library is a busy place, witness all the cars usually parked on South Common Street. Between 1970 and 1994 circulation of books, magazines, and records was at a high level, increasing to about 80,000 pieces in 1994. By 1999 the Library's collection of books exceeded 47,000 volumes and the total circulation was about 147,000 items. But patrons have access to a greater range of choices. An on-line catalogue is available to tap the resources of the Merrimack Valley Library Consortium.

The Library is administered by the Library Director and a Board of Trustees who are elected by the citizens of the Town and serve for three years. They meet with the Director on a monthly basis.

Funds to operate the Library are voted at annual town meetings and most of the money is derived from the tax base. Income from certain trust funds is also available, however, and the largest of the funds is a bequest to the town of Topsfield from Mr. George L. Gould who died in 1921. Mr. Gould's will specified that upon the death of his last child, which occurred in 1989, a portion of the remaining estate should go to the Town of Topsfield to be held as a trust. One half of the income was to be spent for the purchase of books for the public library, and the balance for the purchase of works of art if provisions shall have been made for the reception of such articles. If not, said one half may be used for the repair and upkeep of the library building and the grounds.



**Mr. Gould**



**Trustees of the Town Library in 1994**

The services and facilities of a modern library have changed dramatically since Mr. Gould's days, and therefore the Probate Court ruled on the interpretation of his will. At the time of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Library in 1994 the Trustees began a

study of how the Library might utilize these funds to best serve the Town in the years ahead. The members of that Board were: Rear row: Karen Dow, Martha Morrison, and Joe Collins. Front row: Harry Grobelewski, Director Shiela Glowacki, and Elinore Ansteensen. Catherine Marra was not present for the photo.

The shortcomings of the 1994 library building were documented, and the Trustees engaged consultants to determine how the problems might best be solved. The basic limitations that had to be overcome were the following:

- (1) The building was too small to allow for expected growth. Many of the stacks were difficult to use because of narrow aisles, and a low ceiling.
- (2) The building no longer met the standards for handicapped access.
- (3) The Gallery was too small to accommodate reasonable sized groups for cultural programs.
- (4) The Children's Library was far too small.
- (5) Insufficient seating was available for students to study in quiet.
- (6) And finally, we are entering an age of information explosion. A modern library requires an adequate number of computer terminals that connect to the Internet and access information from CD-ROMS.

While the handsome library building constructed in 1935 had served the Town well for over half a century, the time came for making changes to adapt it for the new age. The sequence of events was as follows:

February 27, 1996	Town voted to buy 11 High Street home
April 10, 1996	Application filed with the State for a grant
May 7, 1996	Schematic design plans approved by the Town
September 19, 1996	State approved a \$1,331,247 grant

October 19/20, 1996      Town voted to accept the State grant and to  
Exclude Library debt from  
Proposition 2 1/2 limitation

The 11 High Street house was bought by the Town using Gould funds. Originally it was planned to use the building as a temporary library but that turned out to be impractical. Instead the building was used later by the contractor for administrative purposes. The house was moved off the site in the spring of 1999.

The cost of the undertaking was about \$3,400,000 and was financed as follows:

from Gould Funds	\$1,300,000
from State Grant	\$1,331,000
by The Town	\$769,000

In January, 1997, the architectural firm of A. Anthony Tappé Associates Inc. was selected. As building plans developed, there were the usual requests for building permits, and design and cost reviews leading eventually to the requesting of bids and the selection of a contractor, G and R Construction, of Malden.

On August 23, 1997 day-to-day library operation were transferred to temporary quarters in the Shopping Center. Library services were conducted from this location until December 23, 1998.

On November 7, 1997 a ground breaking ceremony was held. After hearing from Elia Marnick, Vice-chair of the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, State Senator Bruce Tarr, State Representative Ted Speliotis, and Director Sheila Glowacki, the group went out for a symbolic ground breaking. This group included the State officials, the Library Trustees, Friends of the Library, and a member of the Board of Selectmen. Then came the real work. Asbestos had to be removed in the old building and the Library addition of 1973 had to come down to make way for the new design.

Finally, after many months, the day came when the temporary library was closed and the books were returned. This was a volunteer effort involving several hundred townspeople of all ages. Some 45,000 books packed in some 7,000 bags were transferred from the Shopping Center to Library on rainy days by truck and then carried into the stack areas of the new building by a long book brigade line. Then the bagged books were placed in the stacks where they were to be kept.

During the whole construction period the Building Committee with Martha Morrison as the Chairperson met regularly with the architect, the general contractor, and many sub-contractors. The Library Board of Trustees that saw the work through to completion is shown in the following photo with the Library Director. Front row from left to right we have Catherine Marra, Martha Morrison, and Joan Panella. Rear row from left to right are Shiela Glowacki, Walter Rehak, and Karen Dow, Chair. Audrey Iarocci was not present for the photo.



**Library Board of Trustees in 1999**

The murals depicting Topsfield's early history in the entrance hall of the original building remain and a large new mural now graces a wall in the new Children's Library. It was created by artist David Fichter of Cambridge. He selected Topsfield scenes to blend with

themes appreciated by children to stimulate curiosity about our world.



**David Fichter working on the mural in the Children's Room**

All of the shortcomings of the original building have been addressed, and the Library is able now to accommodate the functions of a modern library in addition to many diverse cultural activities.

There are numerous computer terminals for patrons to use or they can bring their own laptop machines. There are two closed rooms for quiet study and one large meeting room, that may be divided into two separate rooms, with a pull-down screen and a digital projector. One of the two downstairs rooms in the old building will house books of current interest, while the other room is arranged for the reading of periodicals.



**The main desk**



**The new Library**

The new library has been made possible by Mr. Gould's generosity, by help from the State, by the support of the citizens of Topsfield, and particularly by the dedication of the Library Board of Trustees and the Building Committee.

## THE CHURCHES OF TOPSFIELD

By Jan Jansen

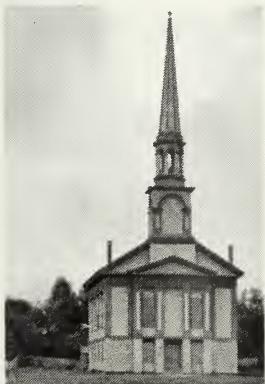
Gathered in 1663, the Congregational Church is by far the oldest organized church in town. It has had a presence on the Common since 1703 but that building has been replaced twice, in 1759 and 1842. Thus the present meeting house dates from 1842. While major changes were made in 1853, 1891, 1968, and 1997, the exterior appearance is essentially the same as it was after the 1842 construction. The modifications made in recent years have dealt mostly with interior changes, principally the chancel area.



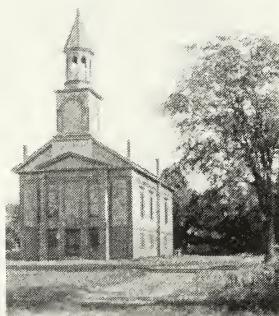
Interior of Congregational Church prior to 1967

In the 1990s a handicapped entrance was added on the north side of the meeting house as well as a lavatory in the narthex. Ultimately old buildings are in need of major repairs. In this case, that involved the restoration of the steeple, described elsewhere in this issue.

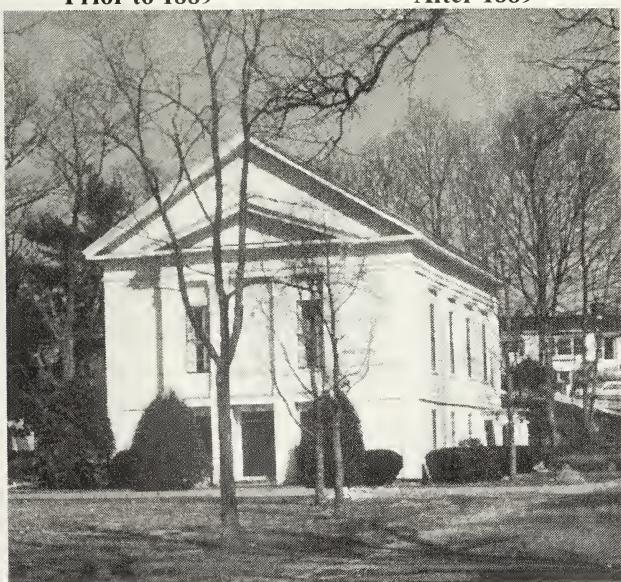
A Methodist Church was built on the Common in 1854. The second floor served as the church sanctuary while the ground floor was used for many church and town functions. Originally it had a tall steeple which was cut down in 1889 and finally eliminated in 1938 when the building became the Parish House of the Congregational Church.



**Prior to 1889**



**After 1889**



**Parish House of the Congregational Church**



A wedding in the Congregational Church in 1968 after extensive interior changes had been made

From the very beginning, the Congregational Church lacked an adequate social hall and classrooms for religious education. This lack was alleviated somewhat in 1924 with the federation of the Congregational and Methodist Churches and particularly after 1938 when the Methodist Church was dissolved and that building became the Parish House of the Congregational Church. The church acquired Emerson Center in 1959 and made extensive modifications to the Parish House in 1963. All this provided office and classroom space but in a campus type setting. All this changed once again when the Fellowship Hall addition to Emerson Center was completed and the Church sold the Parish House to a private party who converted it into a function hall named Topsfield Commons.



**Emerson Center**



**Upstairs in former Parish House after its conversion to Topsfield Commons**

Several Catholic families settled in Topsfield in 1855 and were obliged to travel first to Salem, and then to Danvers to attend Mass. The first Catholic services in Topsfield were held in the Grange Hall beginning in 1914 which formerly stood on the site of 27 Main Street and was gutted by fire in 1941. The St. Rose

Chapel was built in 1922 on Park Street, served by priests from Danvers. It became The St. Rose of Lima Church in 1949 when a resident priest was assigned. The present handsome church was built in 1987. The old building was taken down in 1992 to make room for a parking lot.



**St. Rose of Lima Church built in 1922**



**St. Rose of Lima Church built in 1987**

There is a large parish hall, including a kitchen, on the eastern side of the sanctuary which is used for religious education, meetings, and social affairs. It is also where Topsfield citizens go to cast their ballots in elections. This was done in the Parish House of the Congregational Church before that building became Topsfield Commons.



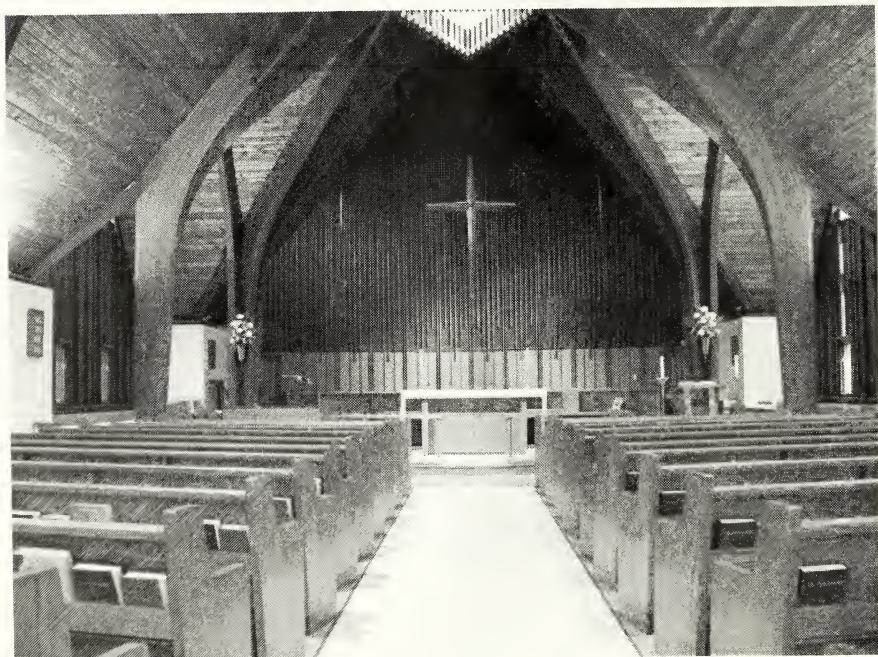
St. Rose Sanctuary

The St. Rose sanctuary is well lighted, with comfortable seating, and good acoustics

The Trinity Episcopal Church of Topsfield and Boxford grew out of a survey made by the Massachusetts Council of Churches in 1957 on the religious needs in the Topsfield-Boxford area. It started as an Episcopal mission in 1957 and services were first held in the Linebrook Congregational building in Ipswich. That building was in very poor shape, not having been used for nearly 100 years, and considerable effort and expense was required to

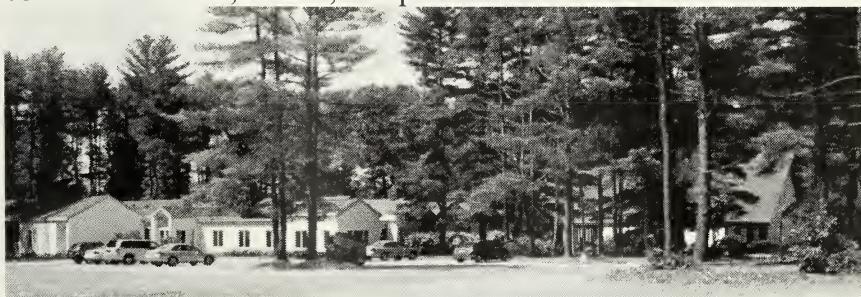


**Trinity Episcopal Church**



**Trinity Episcopal Church Sanctuary**

make the church useful. In 1958 the Executive Committee of the mission set out to raise funds for a new permanent home. Mr. William A. Coolidge gave nine acres of land at the far corner of his large estate on River Road as the site and he also pledged to match all paid-up pledges, dollar for dollar, for the duration of the building project. The architect was John W. Peirce of the firm Peirce and Pierce of Cambridge, and a life-long resident of Topsfield. He designed a tri-partite building complex featuring a connected church, school, and parish hall.



**The completed church complex**

The ground breaking ceremony was held on Sunday, October 26, 1959 and in March 1960 Trinity Episcopal Church of Topsfield and Boxford was officially incorporated as a self-sustaining parish. The first service was held in the yet unfinished sanctuary on October 23, 1960 and the official dedication came on January 22, 1961. The latest and largest addition to the original complex was completed in May 1972.



**Courtyard statuary**

The courtyard statuary of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane was a gift by Mr. Coolidge to the glory of God and in honor of Cardinal Cushing. It was dedicated in March 1966 at an ecumenical service with Richard Cardinal Cushing as one of the participating clergymen.



**Belltower**

The belltower was erected in 1967. An early 19<sup>th</sup> century bell from St. Paul's parish in Newburyport can be rung on Sundays preceding services.

Our Savior Lutheran Church on Boston Street, had its beginning in a house-to-house survey made between August and October in 1962 to investigate the feasibility of establishing a Lutheran church here, to serve the needs of the North Shore from Rowley to Danvers. This led to the founding of Our Savior Lutheran Church with an initial service in Woodbury Auditorium of the Proctor School on November 18, 1962. In 1963 the congregation took an option on property at 478 Boston Street, just south of the Ipswich

line for a permanent church location. Serious inquiry into building on this site began in January 1965. In June 1965 church services were transferred from the Proctor School to the Linebrook Church previously used by the Episcopalians. Ground breaking for the new church on Boston Street occurred on November 20, 1966, and in October 1967 the new church was dedicated.

Originally the church building was sheathed with cedar shingles as shown in the photograph taken in 1989. In 2001 the church was extensively modified, inside and outside, to serve a growing and changing congregation. The exterior appearance after the modifications, as photographed in the winter of 2004, was very different.

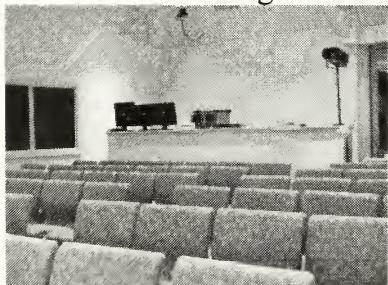


**Our Savior Lutheran Church**



**After 2001 modifications**

Concerning the interior, Our Savior Lutheran Church is now Topsfield's most modern design as shown in the following photos. We include a view of the chancel from the entrance doors. The pews were replaced by comfortable chairs that can be rearranged easily. The chancel is designed to easily accommodate contemporary worship styles. An area at the rear of the sanctuary contains banks of controls and switches to adjust the lighting and acoustics for recording and broadcasting.



**Control panel enclosure**



**Organ**

The original pipe organ, dating from 1875-1880 and bought from the Second Congregational Church in Peabody, was replaced by a four-manual plus pedal electronic organ able to simulate a wide range of organ sounds including that of a classical pipe organ.



Chancel of Our Savior Lutheran Church

At the entrance to the sanctuary there is a glass wall and two glass doors on a track. This whole assembly can be moved out of the way thus adding the large entrance area for additional seating.



Entrance to the sanctuary

## TOPSFIELD'S LAST REMAINING ONE ROOM SCHOOLHOUSE

By Norman Isler

Education was important to the people of the Massachusetts Bay Colony from the very beginning. In 1642 the Massachusetts Bay Colony passed legislation requiring families to teach their children "to read and understand the principles of religion." During this time children were schooled mainly at home where learning to read and write was considered important to understand the Bible and scripture, and these documents were used as the primary learning material.

In 1647 the Massachusetts Bay Colony legislators passed a law directing towns of fifty households to appoint teachers of reading and writing and towns of one hundred households to establish grammar schools. Eventually every New England colony except Rhode Island had such a law.

George Francis Dow in his *History of Topsfield, Mass* devoted Chapter 17 to the subject. He recorded that the very first school in Topsfield began at least in 1694 per town records which show that Goodman Lovewell was allowed to live in the parsonage house which was left un-occupied because Parson Joseph Capen lived in his own house. He was "...to keepe schole and swepe ye meeting house". He served as schoolmaster at least until 1696.

There was much discussion and many votes in the early town meetings where schools should be located. On several occasions projects were rejected because cost estimates were too high. Finally, by 1794 there were three one room schoolhouses in three sections of the town to serve the children in those districts. The South School was located on the hill south of the river close to what is now the Newburyport Turnpike. The Middle School (or

East School ) was located on Perkins Row. It is believed that the flag displayed in the Gould Barn once waved over the East School. The North School was located in the area that is now Ipswich Road and East Street. At a town meeting on September 10, 1794 the town voted to build a fourth school, the Centre School, approximately where the town hall now stands.

By 1845 the schools were performing well but after many years of neglect the town voted to replace all four school buildings. The original East School was sold in 1847 to Douglas Willey for \$22.75 who moved it to High Street. He used it as a carpenter's shop until 1860 when the building was moved again to Boston Street where it was converted into part of a stable. The last East School was built in 1847 on Perkins Row near the home of Dr. Henry F. Sears, later the Thomas Proctor residence.



The East Schoolhouse in about 1890

By 1890 only four students attended the East School and the school committee decided to close the school and transport the students to the Centre School, then housed in the enlarged

Topsfield Academy building on School Street. Perhaps the picture of the old school shows it in its final days with the teacher, Miss Ruth E. Bradstreet, and those four pupils. Six years later the North and South Schools were also discontinued and all Topsfield students were transferred to the Centre School.

The East School closed in the year ending March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1891 due, as noted, to low enrollment. The house was moved in 1902 to Dudley Quinn Perkins's property at 121 Perkins Row, supposedly for use as a poultry house; however it had a brick chimney and field stone foundation at this location which raises a question about its actual use. Finally it was basically abandoned and its condition gradually deteriorated until, in 2006, efforts were made by Alexandra de Buy Wenniger and Norman J. Isler to obtain the house for the purpose of restoring it. They envisioned it being brought back to or near its original condition and relocated to a more central area where it would be used as an example of school facilities of that period for future generations. It could also be used for local community activities much like the Danvers Putnamville school house. The East School house's then current owners, Robin Long and Paul Ackerman, graciously donated the building to the Topsfield Historical Society on November 28, 2006. .

Isler asked Aaron Sturgis of Preservation Timber Framing Inc. to inspect the building to verify whether it was capable of being restored and what the cost might be. Sturgis's verdict, rendered in May, 2007 was that it was indeed restorable but first it should be stabilized; two holes in the roof and some rotted structural members needed urgent attention. A concerned anonymous society member made a generous donation to cover the cost of stabilization. The area immediately surrounding the building was cleared of saplings and other brush by volunteers in the fall of 2006 to allow room for scaffolding. The overgrown unpaved roadway leading to the building from Candlewood Drive was also cleared to allow vehicle access. The stabilization project was approved by the society directors at a November 9, 2006 board

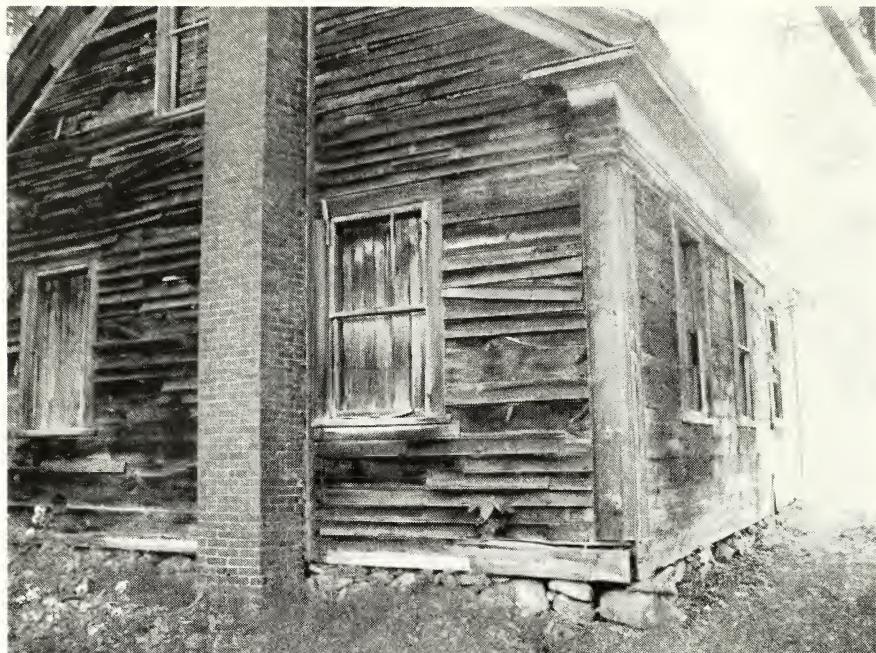
meeting and was completed in April 2007 accompanied by the Sturgis May report of existing conditions and an estimate of \$149,000 to restore it on a site provided by the society. This estimated cost would be affected by the functions the building would serve and other factors such as site preparation.



**East Schoolhouse in June, 2007**



**Interior**



Rear view, June 2007

For an example of adaptive use of a historic building the Danvers's Putnamville School House can be used. That structure, built in 1852, was restored by the town and is used as a community meeting house. The building is registered with the Massachusetts Historical Commission. It is currently on lease to the Art Association for their activities. In addition to serving as a example of an early American educational facility, the East Schoolhouse's possible adaptive uses could include a meeting place for community gatherings, an information center or as a museum. As is the case with many historic buildings, some modifications would be anticipated to allow its adaptive use. For example, even though the school house had no plumbing, its planned restoration might include a kitchen sink and indoor restroom as well as some storage space.

While the building's deterioration was halted, a search was undertaken to find a suitable location for its eventual restoration as

it once was, ie, a one room schoolhouse of the mid 1800's complete with furnishings of that period. This seems to be the most appropriate use of the old building. The society's only property at #1 Howlett Street was deemed unacceptable as the house was not historically appropriate on the grounds of the much earlier 1683 Capen House. The Topsfield Fairgrounds expressed interest in the building being erected on their property as part of a early American village display which already has a blacksmith shop; however it was felt that the building's use as an example of a schoolhouse could not be guaranteed and their request to have the building donated to them was not felt to be in the building's best interest. A potential site suggested by several individuals was midway between town hall and Proctor Elementary School. This location would be on town and/or school owned property and offers several advantages over any other site identified at that time, such as visibility, accessibility, some parking capability and some level of security. Subsequently in the Spring of 2008, Isler held a series of exploratory meetings with the town manager and selectmen, the Park and Cemetery Department, the Historical Commission, and the Elementary School Committee, to both acquaint them with the concept and to obtain a sense of their feelings regarding the schoolhouse's renovation, relocation and use. No objections were raised, and in fact, a sense of support was evident throughout the series of meetings. The plan at this time- August 2008- is to apply for permission from the Massachusetts Historical Commission to erect the house on the site described above since that area is on the National Register which is administered by the commission. Once that and other permits or approvals are obtained a community wide fund raising campaign will be undertaken in parallel with applications being submitted to a number of foundations interested in historic preservation. By this approach it is hoped that this piece of Topsfield's history will be preserved for future generations.

*Since 1974 when a shed behind the Capen House was converted into the Capen House library and connected to the Capen House, the Society lacked a facility to store equipment and supplies needed to maintain the property. When Norman Isler became president he acted to correct this deficiency and in January, 1991 he wrote a letter to the membership advising them of the progress being made. The following is an excerpt from that letter.*

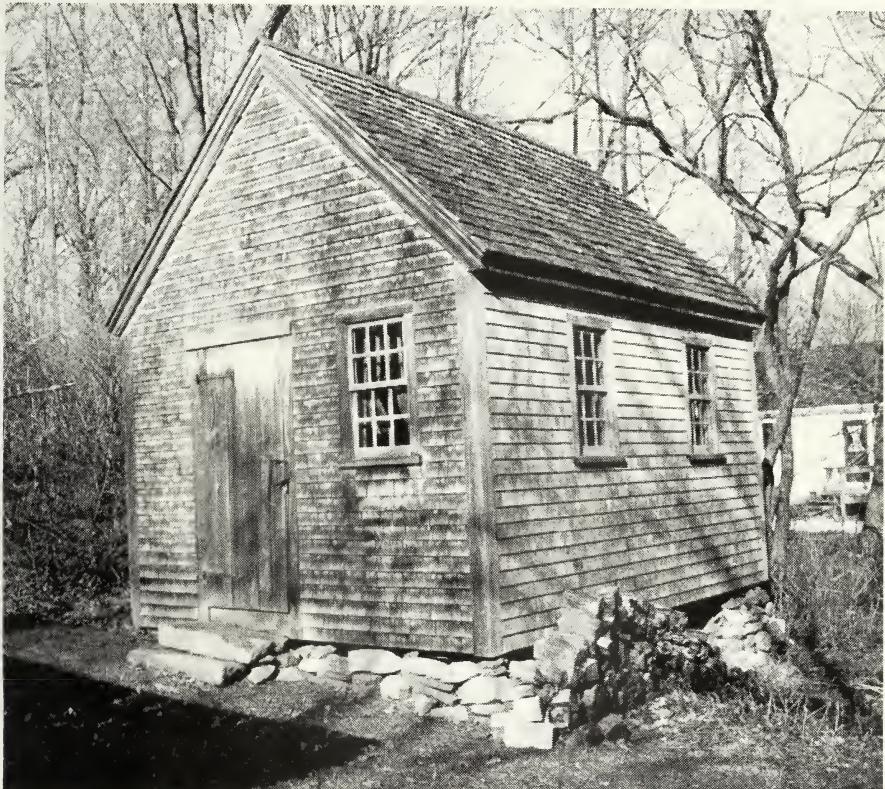
## **PARSON CAPEN HOUSE MAINTENANCE BUILDING**

By Norman Isler

Construction of the maintenance building was begun last fall following approval of the project by the Executive Board in April, 1990. Plans were drawn up by architect and member Ben Nutter for a 12' by 16' building of the early 1800s, like a shoemaker's shop and the work proceeded quite well using volunteer help. Contractors were used to pour the footings and lay the sill. Cedar shales will be used for the roof and cedar shingles will complete the outside walls. Ken Crocker, Don King, Ken Turner and Bob Dow constructed and raised the frame and did the sheeting. The window frames and door were prefabricated in Ken Crocker's wood working shop with John Nutter creating some missing antique hinge pintels. Mareen and Joe Geller very graciously donated a quantity of pine boards cut from trees on their property to the Society, enough now on hand (courtesy of Steve Nutter's truck) to finish the floor and attic plus a potting bench for the Priscilla Capen Herb Society.

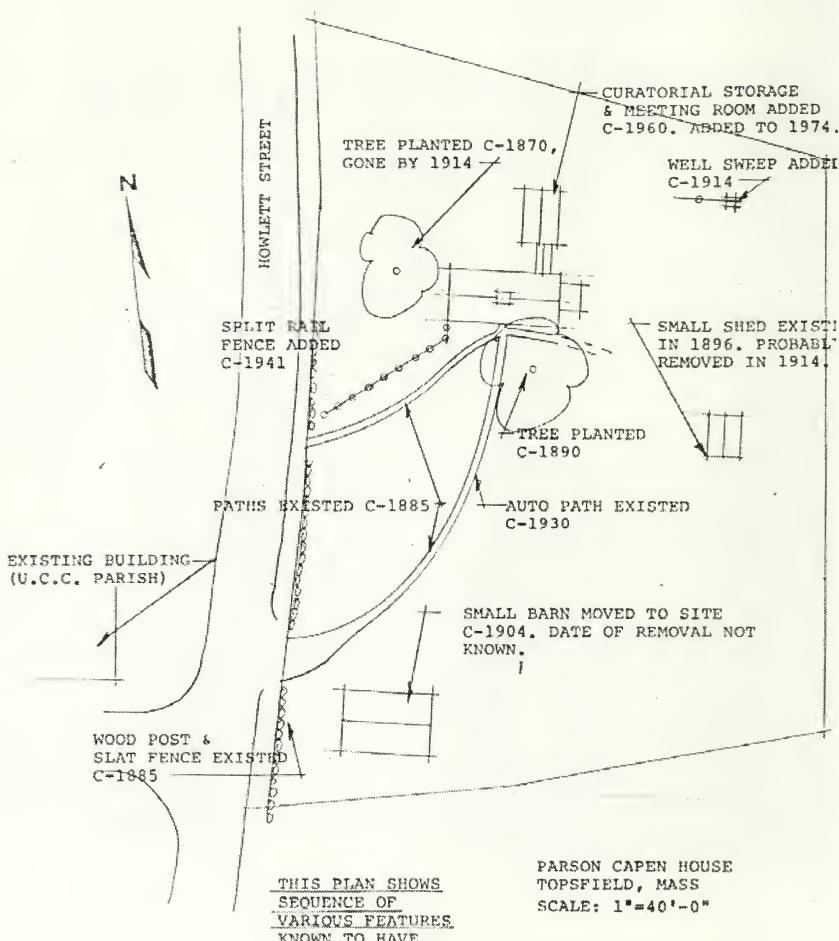
It is interesting to note that on one of the earliest photos of the Capen property a maintenance building like this one can be seen in nearly the same location. Incidentally, the site was chosen upon the advice of Ben Nutter who thoughtfully pointed out that care should be taken to not locate the structure so as to detract from the classic view of the Capen House as seen from the parking lot.

In addition to being a worthwhile and fun task it is gratifying to see that the volunteer spirit is still alive in our town. Our goal is to have the building completed by Strawberry Festival time, June 15<sup>th</sup>.



#### **The maintenance building**

A report entitled "Specifications for conservation and repairs" dated June 1975, included a drawing of the Capen lot which portrayed the history of what was located on the lot over the years. The map is reproduced on the following page.



SPNEA/DMH/ 6/2/75

REF: PHOTOS & HORTON  
BRADSTREET

*The reconstruction of the Joseph Gould Barn on the Capen House property was the most ambitious program of the Topsfield Historical Society since the acquisition and restoration of the Capen House itself in 1913. The project was accomplished under the leadership of Norman Isler, president of the Society. He gave unstintingly of his time, energy and knowledge to lead a relatively small group of volunteers. He dealt with professional contractors who supplied services beyond what the volunteers were able to do. He led the publicity and fund raising activities. Reconstruction of the barn accomplished several purposes. It preserved and re-used the framework of one of Topsfield's oldest landmarks. It provided the Historical Society with a centrally located place for meetings and for the storage of historical records. Wall-mounted displays serve to exhibit artifacts. Finally the barn is a facility for private and community events thereby providing the society with another source of income.*

## **THE CAPTAIN JOSEPH GOULD BARN**

By Norman Isler

To learn about the barn is to step back into Colonial American history. It was built by the Goulds, one of the founding families of Topsfield. Zaccheus Gould (1589-1668) was the first Gould in the new world, having arrived from Hemel Hemstead, England in 1638 with his family. He took an active part in creating the town, then known as New Meadows, and was one of its leading citizens. His only son, John Gould (1635-1709), later had five sons, each of whom had a large family. The oldest son, also John Gould (1662-1724), was a weaver and was a man of note in the town. It was he who built the barn in 1710 after buying the second meeting house that stood in what is now Pine Grove Cemetery for five pounds for use as a barn. Several of the posts in the barn show mortise holes not needed for the barn, and so it is possible that some of these posts may have come from the old meeting house. If so, this would place their age sometime before 1663 when the meeting house was moved

from its original location on Meeting House Lane.

John Gould's fifth son, Joseph Gould (1677-1753), held the commission of Captain, was a selectman, and represented the town in the General Court for many years. He had ten children, several of whom died young. One was also called Joseph (1726-1803) and it was he for whom our barn is named. Joseph Gould was a farmer who was elected by the citizens of the town eligible for military service as Captain of a military company on December 5, 1774. On April 19, 1775, when the alarm came that the British were marching on Lexington and Concord, tradition holds that he left his plow in mid-furrow and galloped off to help drive the Red Coats back to Boston. In addition to his military service he held leadership roles in the community and served as a church deacon.

Captain Joseph Gould was married to Elizabeth Emerson, the oldest daughter of Rev. John Emerson, pastor of the Congregational Church. It is interesting to note that the barn named for Captain Gould is now located next to the Emerson Center named for his father-in-law. We note also that Mrs. Curtis Campbell, wife of a former president of the Topsfield Historical Society was a direct Gould descendant.



The barn in 1900

The Gould home and barn stood on what is now 129 Washington Street and it remained in the Gould family until 1872 when it was conveyed to Timothy Fuller. William Abbott acquired title in 1941 and the property was bought by Dr. Michael Schiff in 1968.

In the spring of 1983, Dr. and Mrs. Schiff made an offer of an unrestricted gift of this barn to the Society including the cost of careful disassembly. They did express the hope that the barn would be restored in a manner approximating its early and original state and offered the services of Richard Nickerson, an experienced carpenter, to help in its disassembly. A barn committee was formed of Bob Dow, Jack Peirce and Lenn Bergsten, with Lenn acting as chairman, to examine the feasibility of the Society accepting the Schiff's offer. The barn was in seriously deteriorated condition with its roof caved in and virtually all of its white oak posts rotted at their bases.



**The barn in 1983**

Research by Bob Dow disclosed that the barn was one of the oldest in New England, if not the country, having been built around 1710. Against this rich history, it was recommended by the committee that the Society accept the Schiff's generous offer, and on June 2, 1983 President Curtis Campbell made the acceptance. The barn

committee then began working closely with Mr. Nickerson, photographing, measuring and identifying the major framing timbers.

Arrangements were made to utilize the Maryknoll gymnasium building on Route 1 to store the timbers and, in July, volunteers swept the floor and laid down plastic sheeting in advance of the move. From June 21st through August 8th, 1983 Nickerson and two helpers disassembled the structure piece by piece with Lenn Bergsten identifying each timber piece by metal tags and colored yarn. He also measured post lengths as they had been initially, that is before becoming rotted.

During July and August, truckloads of barn timbers were moved from Washington Street to the Maryknoll site, some by way of Lenn Bergsten's garage where he examined them further. Timber transportation was provided by John Nutter, Ed and Glenn Harrington, Lou Olmstead, and Frank and Jean Demers. Bergsten also laid out the timbers by bents and purlins across the gymnasium floor. Also in August Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Peabody offered select Howlett- Hobbs mill and dwelling timbers as an unrestricted gift to the Society. The offer was accepted and Lenn Bergsten moved those timbers to the Maryknoll site.

During late August examination by a most noted authority on barns, Robert Blair St. George confirmed the barn was one of the three oldest in this part of the country, placing it squarely in Parson Capen's period in Topsfield. The barn located at 95 River Road was also one of the three. A later examination of the River Road barn by Jan Lewandoski of East Greensboro, Vermont led to his conclusion that both barns, in addition to being about the same age, were likely designed by the same builder. Further research by the committee showed the US direct tax records of 1798 described the barn as being 28 X 90 feet where as the existing size was 28 X 41 feet. Later examination of the framing by Lewandoski, showed that the right end bent to be an intermediate bent, as evidenced by the

corner bracing being located in the center of the post and beam instead of along their sides. The missing barn bays therefore evidently extended from the right side of the four remaining bays. Examination also showed that the rear and right side extensions of the barn had been built at a later time period as evidenced by their construction style, mainly stud and rafter, instead of post and beam.

In September the deteriorated timber areas were treated with insecticide and fungicide by Bergsten. He also removed loose material from the timbers, staked out an area on the Capen property where the barn might be re erected and performed some preliminary load calculations. From the probate lists of both Priscilla and Joseph Capen it was known that they had a horse and a cow, so presumably they must have had a barn in which to keep them. Early photographs of the Capen property do show a barn-like structure in the low land next to the Emerson Center parking lot. Several large flat stones were also present in this location which may have been part of a barn floor or foundation, thus lending credence to the premise that a barn once stood on the property. As Jack Peirce observed in a November 22, 1983 feasibility report, to re-erect the barn at this location would compromise the fine traditional view of the Capen House as one enters from the town Common.



Late 19<sup>th</sup> century picture showing a barn near the Capen House

During October, timber measurements were taken by Bergsten and Jack Peirce for use in a database prepared by Jack for use in reconstruction. Preliminary load calculations were made by both Bergsten and Peirce with Peirce also creating the first re-erection cost estimate in his November 2nd report. He found that reconstruction was entirely practical but only at substantial cost. He also wondered about the possible detraction from historic authenticity in making the barn functional and useful.

In November, 1983 the Barn Committee was expanded to include the following members: Gordon Brandes, Society President, Curtis Campbell, George Clark, Mrs. William Crawford, Robert Dow, Jack Peirce, Architect, and Lenn Bergsten, Chairman. It was recommended by this committee that the timbers be put into storage until such time as the Society felt it had the where-with-all to reconstruct the barn.

In the early 1990's the Commonwealth of Massachusetts decided to raze the Maryknoll building, thus eliminating the gymnasium as a timber storage site. With the aid of volunteers, the timbers were moved to a barn on the Meredith Farms property owned by Mr. William Coolidge, a former director of the Historical Society. About a year later Mr. Coolidge died, leaving Meredith Farms to MIT. Shortly afterwards MIT notified the Society of their plans to raze the storage barn, requesting removal of the timbers from the property. With the aid of the local boy scout troop and the forbearance of MIT, the timbers were again moved, this time to another barn still on the Meredith Farm property. In the process of this latest move Society President Norm Isler noted that some of the timbers showed signs of powder post beetle attack. Believing that the time had come after more than 10 years in storage for the Society to either resurrect the barn or give the historic timbers to an organization that would utilize them in an appropriate manner, Isler recommended the membership be polled. In June 1993, a membership survey was made to determine the extent of interest in reconstructing the barn and the level of commitment to support the

project financially.

Four objectives were defined for the project as listed in the survey, first and foremost being preservation of the timber framing. Next was to provide a display area for artifacts of the period, particularly those related to agriculture. Following this was a need to provide a meeting place for Society events as well as place where records could be stored and easily accessed. Up to this point the records were stored in the unheated and somewhat inaccessible Capen attic. Finally, the facility could be used for private and organizational events. Over 95% of those responding to the survey said they felt the Society should proceed on its own, and about 82% of those so inclined indicated they would support it financially. 43% of the returns indicated they would provide materials, professional advice or service in some capacity. Encouraged by these results as well as by the level of support demonstrated building a shed for use in Capen house and grounds maintenance in 1991, a new committee was organized in June, 1993 composed initially of the following individuals:

Elizabeth Brown Mulholland

Jan Jansen

Barbara Carpenter

Dorothy Leach

Ken Crocker

Ben Nutter

Norm Isler, Chairman

Tim Perkins

Peter Jaquith

Bill Whiting

The purpose of the committee was to pursue the project to its completion. A series of meetings were then held at the Capen library for about the next several years to organize and maintain the project. During this time the committee membership changed due to reasons such as marriage, death and transfers until at the project's completion. Five of the original 10 remained: Carpenter, Isler, Jansen, Whiting, and Nutter.

Architect Ben Nutter brought his skills to bear by preparing conceptual drawings and some detailed sketches so that cost estimates

could be created and permits obtained. A set of specifications was developed defining details to be included.

The project was organized into stages as follows:

1. Research and design
2. Inventory and condition assessment
3. Fund raising
4. Frame restoration
5. Site preparation-clearing, excavation, foundation, grading
6. Floor joists and deck construction
7. Assembly of bents on the deck
8. Frame erection
9. Roofing, sheathing, siding, doors, windows, finish flooring, cabinets, utilities, et. al.

It was believed by the committee that refurbishing of the timbers and their re-erection would best be left to professionals. About 80% of the four bay structure was considered reusable; even the original builder's marks were still clearly visible. After consulting with the Boston Society of Architects, they recommended Jan Lewandoski, preservation carpenter from East Greensboro, Vermont as being well qualified in this field. He was contacted, visited the Meredith Farm site on October 19 and again on December 28, 1993 to view the timbers, and voiced the opinion that it was entirely feasible to rebuild the barn on a foundation to be provided by the Society. On February 13, 1994 his proposal was accepted. His tasks were to get the timbers in condition, provide replacements for any missing or unusable pieces and raise the re-assembled frame. On April 30, 1994 Lewandoski moved the timbers requiring preparation to his Vermont shop where they were worked on by his crew in parallel with site preparation work by volunteers in Topsfield. Lenn Bergsten's meticulous identification and documentation proved invaluable during reconstruction. Jan Lewandoski said that this was the best documented set of barn timbers he had been in contact with in his career.

It was evident that the barn had two later period shed-like additions; one on the left side measuring 12 X 28 feet and the second on the rear measuring 14 X 41 feet. It was decided to utilize the left shed extension to house 2 wheelchair accessible restrooms, an exit, and a small kitchen, while the rear extension would be used for both record retention and access as well as providing a storage space. While neither shed extensions' intended uses were historically appropriate, they were felt to be as justifiable as heating or lighting would be of respecting historic considerations while providing a functional facility. A layout was then prepared showing the intended uses of the facility.

The kitchen layout was defined by Society member Ardie Clark who had considerable experience in preparing meals for large groups of people. Her counsel proved invaluable. Compliments on the arrangement came in from caterers and others who subsequently used the facility.

Inclusion of a kitchen and restrooms in the plan meant consideration of a septic system. Peter Giabbai, Professional Engineer and president of Ja-By Engineering of Topsfield took over this task on a volunteer basis. On April 22, 1994 he supervised the running of percolation tests which disclosed that the only feasible location for a septic field was the level area in front of the Capen parking place. The tests also showed that a pump up system would be required and that any basement depth should be limited to about 50 inches. Giabbai designed a system meeting the new Title V requirements, obtained the necessary permit and supervised its installation by Thompson.

One consequence of the water table level was that considerable additional fill would be required over the septic field. Jim Brady, a local developer working on the Great Hill senior housing project, was approached by Isler, and he agreed to provide 800 yards of free fill plus field stones that would be needed to line the barn foundation and to build a retaining wall. Support such as this from individuals

like Giabbai and Brady was outstanding and enabled the project to be accomplished at minimum cost.

Fund raising efforts now began with a committee organized for that purpose. It was initially made up of Bette Hawkins, Mary Brown, Allison D'Amario and Norm Isler. An estimated amount of \$170,000 was required. Initial grant applications were created by Elizabeth Brown, a preservation major who also researched county records, to help define what type of barn would have existed about 1710. The research indicated that the Capen's barn was most likely a combination livestock and granary barn which was found to be a common type of barn at the time. Vertical pine siding appeared to be typical at that time, with the boards put up while still freshly cut, the idea being that normal shrinkage would result in gaps that would provide air circulation as a precaution against spontaneous combustion. Research also indicated that barns in this period typically were located at least 100 feet and downhill from the dwelling house. The barn's specific location on the Capen property



**Ben Nutter and Norm Isler at the site selected for the barn**

was then considered with the final conclusion being that positioning it as far to the rear of the property as allowed by the town's by laws (10 feet in the case of an historic structure) and on the level portion at least 100 feet from the Capen House and downhill would be a reasonable solution considering the available alternatives. This location also had the advantage of being located near the duck pond which most likely was a water source for livestock.

In parallel with research and preliminary planning, the membership was informed of the survey results and a subsequent Executive Board decision to move ahead with the project as funds would permit. In March 1994 the Society made a public announcement of its intent to restore the barn and began an appeal for financial support. In addition to the membership solicitation, requests for funds were made to the community at large, to people named Gould and Capen in particular, to local businesses, and to private foundations with an interest in historic preservation. In addition, special fund raising activities were organized such as a Society sponsored trip to Ellis Island, a band concert on the town common, selling of barn models, tee shirts and the proceeds of a British Broadcasting Company's filming on the Capen House for an edition of the show "American Visions". A Pride Stride walk helped as did a flea market held on the Common. Proceeds from the 1994 Strawberry Festival were applied towards the project.

Over 55 proposals were written by Isler to potential donor foundations with 7 ultimately responding favorably. By April 29, 1994, \$25,084 had been pledged, about half from individual contributors and the rest from a mix of corporations and other sources. One unexpected source of funds was from Proctor School. Fourth grade teacher Mrs. Susan Keliher read of the Society's plan and took it upon herself to organize a penny fund drive in her class which soon spread to encompass the entire school. She used the activity to teach her students not only some local history but also arithmetic, bookkeeping and even volunteerism. The committee was impressed with this display of concern, especially coming as it did

from an unexpected source. The amount it raised (\$176.00) was helpful but the real value was in the morale boost it gave to the committee, not to mention the learning offered to the students. That portion of the fund appeal which focused on individuals defined three levels of potential support: Master Carpenter, Journeyman, and Apprentice, the level being a function of the amount of the contribution. Individual contributor donations ranged from \$5.00 to \$5000.00. 30 Master Carpenters, 35 Journeymen and 303 Apprentices participated in the drive which significantly helped. By September 13, 1994, \$65,318 had been pledged with \$55,903 on hand towards the estimated \$170,000 total project cost. A \$10,000 loan from Beverly National Bank was arranged to allow the project to continue to a weathertight stage.

One foundation which wished to remain anonymous offered a \$10,000 matching grant which was met by the committee's other sources. Virtually all of the funds were applied directly to the project since no professional fund raisers or other overhead costs existed except for insurance to cover the volunteers, mailing expenses and interest on the short term loan. The local cable television channel was used to promote the project via a short taped interview with the committee. The fact that the barn was originally constructed about 22 years before George Washington was born was included in the information package assembled by Jeff Runnion of Runnion Associates and helped convey the sense of age represented by the framing. Local artist Larry Webster made up a barn logo that was used on stationary, tee shirts and caps to promote the project. Newspaper coverage was solicited with the result that a growing number of people were becoming aware of the project. Two scale models were made by Bunny Nutter for display in the Family and Beverly National Bank lobbies as an aid to publicity. A donation was received from as far away as Hawaii with several from the state of Washington as well as other parts of the country. The Danvers Home Depot store granted a discount on some building materials. The Park & Cemetery Superintendent, Steve Shephard, allowed the Society use of pine logs left from cuttings in the Pine Grove

Cemetery (where Joseph Gould is buried), even cutting more trees than were in his way, so that sufficient board feet were available for siding. Scott Dwinnell offered 3 large old oak trees on his (King's Grant) property if the Society would help in their felling. Both timber offers were gratefully accepted and John Nutter, Bill Whiting and Norm Isler subsequently helped Scott in carrying out these offers. In March, 1995 Jack Peirce, Mickie Moore, Bill Whiting and Norm Isler



**Pine lumber from the cemetery**

cut up pine timber donated by Patricia and Russell Brickett at their Garden Street site and moved it to the Capen location. A portable saw mill was then brought in to cut the logs into 1 inch thick boards which were then stored until air dried- 6 months for pine and 1 ½ years for the oak. The project was now beginning to take on the feel of something the entire community was supporting.

An application was submitted to the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) requesting permission to allow construction of the barn on the National landmark Capen property. Other permit applications such as those required by the Conservation Commission, Historic Commission, building, plumbing, electrical



**Portable sawmill in operation**

inspectors and Water Department were also submitted. MHC required that an archaeological survey of the site be conducted by a recognized archaeologist, and Boston University's Professor Mary Beaudry was selected to undertake the survey. She enlisted the aid of BU's Archaeology club as unpaid assistants, and on November 13, 1993 eighteen test pits 1 1/2 feet deep were dug in the footprint of the barn and along the proposed utility trenches. While no Colonial artifacts were uncovered, during the 17th pit dig a sharp-eyed student discovered what was later identified as a 2000-4000 year old Squibnocket Native American projectile point made of felsite. As a result of this finding MHC requested additional pits be dug to ensure no other such prehistoric artifacts might be present; however with further digging none were found. The Squibnocket tribe was based in the Martha's Vineyard area where felsite material is also found. Speculation as to how this projectile point came to Topsfield was that it might have belonged to a solitary hunter lying in wait for game at a nearby watering hole, known today as the duck

pond, about 60 feet away from the discovery site. Finally, in September 1994 following submittal of a completion memo on November 23, 1993, project approval was obtained from MHC.

As time went on, sufficient funds were pledged or realized to give confidence that the goal would indeed be reached, and accordingly a date in late May 1995 was chosen for the ground breaking ceremony. Students from the Pingree School in Hamilton helped clear the site along with Bill Whiting, Peter Jacquith, John Nutter and Norm Isler. Joyce Bergsten, widow of Lenn Bergsten, wielded the shovel following a brief ceremony at which refreshments were served to the assembled crowd of about 50 people.



**Massive floor joists installed by volunteers**

Thompson Construction Company was selected to dig the hole for the basement, and in June 1995 the foundation was poured. In July the rough floor was installed, supported by a massive Douglas fir joist. The rear shed wall, about 7 X 41 feet, was fabricated on top of the floor, ready for raising by hand in August at a special symbolic ceremony by the volunteers. Raising of the barn's main frame took place in September 1995 under Lewandoski's direction with the aid

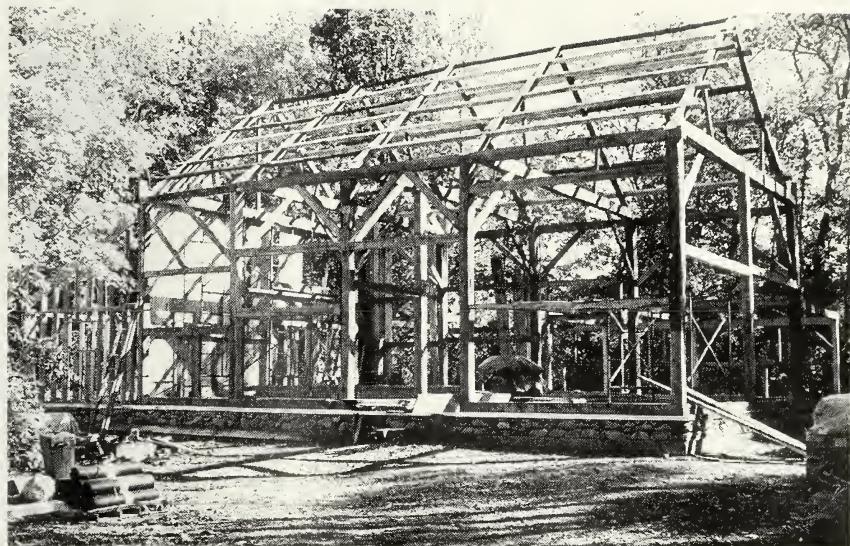
of his crew and a huge crane.



Raising of the rear shed wall by volunteers



Crowd at the symbolic barn raising



**After the framework of the barn was raised**

About this time, retired general contractor and Topsfield resident Lee Marchand joined the small cadre of volunteers and brought his impressive carpentry skills to bear. With his support, plus that of Dick Carlson, Bill Whiting, Carl Porter, Ed DesChene, Russ Blauser, Dick Frederickson, Jan Jansen, John Nutter, Larry Shirck, Norm Isler, Fred Smith, and others to a somewhat lesser degree, the interior siding installation, which began in September, was completed in June, 1996, along with insulation and exterior siding. The roof, which may originally been made of thatch, was constructed of red cedar shales and installed by Aaron Sturgis, a highly regarded preservation carpenter of Elliot, Maine. Plumbing and electrical work took place under contract in parallel with the carpentry work. The electrical supply line and telephone and security lines were all run in underground conduits to help maintain the barn's appearance as it might have been originally. The gas line was installed in November. Once the building was weathertight the oak floor boards were laid after resin paper was installed. Oak was selected as being a good compromise for flooring, recognizing that the original floor most likely was dirt or at best, field stone which clearly would not have been in keeping with the currently



**The barn before the roof was completed and the exterior vertical siding was applied**

envisioned usage.

Two of Nutter's clients inadvertently helped with the barn windows. Both were remodeling their homes and threw out old window sashes no longer desired, one set of which were the proper size for the barn; however the glass was modern. The other set had straw glass panes which was more in keeping with the barn period but were too large. After both sets had been retrieved from dumpsters, volunteers over the winter of 1994 re-cut the straw glass panes and glazed them into the proper sized sashes. Window hinges were modeled after those on the Capen House and were subsequently hand made by a New Hampshire craftsman as was some of the door hardware. Eric Sloan's book was used as a reference for barn door wooden hardware which volunteer Fred Smith made in his shop. Main barn door hinges were made by hand at the Saugus Iron Works Forge by their blacksmith, Curtis White. Other hinges were donated.

A deviation from a purely historic perspective had to do with insulating the building and providing heat so that it might be used year round. Rather than have vertical air gaps between siding boards as might have been employed originally, it was deemed necessary to insulate the walls and roof. The walls were designed to have one inch thick vertical pine siding with backing boards along the outside joints. 2 inch thick foam panels were then sandwiched in between to result in a  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inch thick wall with an R value of at least 19. The inside backing boards were ship-lapped to make the insulation invisible inside the barn. The roof was designed in a similar manner but with an air gap for ventilation and cedar shales on the outside instead of pine siding. Wiring for possible use by ventilating ceiling fans was also planned in the event that the height of the barn might cause air stagnation layers. The heating system design was constrained by the desire for rapid heating for winter meetings: no visible oil tanks and no chimney. The choice was made for two gas-fired condensing furnaces operating in a forced hot air system. These furnaces with their low temperature exhausts did not require a chimney, the exhaust exiting through the rear basement wall through plastic pipes. An Essex Gas Company main ran along Howlett Street, facilitating a connection which was made on November 18, 1996. The furnaces were installed in the basement to conserve space and the air ducts hidden under the floor and in a wall.

As the structure began to take shape, the Society directors suggested that a sprinkler system be considered to protect the barn from fire, one of the main ways barns disappear. Four other Topsfield barns had disappeared while this project was underway: one due to fire, one deliberately destroyed due to it being in the way of new construction, and two due to neglect, finally being abandoned.

Commonwealth Sprinkler Company of Boxford was contracted and installed a wet system covering the entire building with the control valves located in the basement. The system was fed by a 4-inch line

running to the Howlett Street main. The Capen House water line was subsequently connected to this line as well.

A security system was installed by Essex Alarm Company of Beverly with some of the work accomplished by volunteers in order to keep the cost low. The fire alarm system was hard-wired directly to the Fire Department about 3 blocks away and now includes low room temperature as well as basement water level warning sensors. An intruder system was installed at the same time.

After the oak floor was laid, some of the remaining material was used by Ed DesChene to make the kitchen cabinets. A number of benches and two chairs were also made, some of which were sold with the proceeds applied towards completion of the project. Racks were built by Jan Jansen to store 96 padded chairs purchased, along with 12 round and 3 rectangular tables. Shelves were installed in the records room by Jansen who also built display cases plus a stand made for an artifact display and a lectern. A PA system was given by Mr. and Mrs. Carleton Porter. Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Peabody donated a 900-pound millstone from the Hobbs Howlett mill site from their Camp Meeting Road property which was somewhat laboriously manhandled into position at the side door for use as an entrance step. A microwave oven was donated by Mr. and Mrs. Porter to help furnish the kitchen.

In April 1997 final grading of the property was done by Thompson followed by power raking and hydro-seeding. An entrance ramp was constructed and a landscape plan was created by Barbara Carpenter, who donated plantings appropriate to the period.

By May 1997 the barn was ready for its grand opening which was held on May 31, 1997 and attended by over 300 people. A plaque was unveiled listing the names of the key individuals, foundations, and companies who made the project possible. Some of the key people and organizations contributing to the project are listed below:

**Volunteers:**

Lenn Bergsten  
 Russ Blauser  
 Bill Burgess  
 Bob Dow  
 Dick Carlson  
 Ed DesChene  
 Dick Frederickson  
 Norm Isler  
 Jan Jansen

**Foundations:**

Nathaniel & Elizabeth P.  
 Stevens Foundation  
 Abbott & Dorothy Stevens  
 Foundation  
 Eastern Bank Charitable  
 Foundation

**Corporate / Businesses**

Abbot Shoe Store  
 American Legion Post  
 Ben Nutter Associates  
 Beverly National Bank  
 Borden Company  
 Business Services, Topsfield  
 Clark Steven Committee  
 Community Newspapers  
 David Pierce, CPA  
 E.A.. Stevens Insurance Co.  
 Essex Alarm Company  
 Essex County Farming Assoc.  
 Evans Industries  
 Family Bank  
 GE Elfun Society  
 Grand Rental of Peabody  
 Home Depot, Danvers

Mickie Moore  
 John Nutter  
 Bunnie Nutter  
 Ben Nutter  
 Carl Porter  
 Larry Schirck  
 Fred Smith  
 Bill Whiting

Cricket Foundation  
 Arthur H. Wellman Trust  
 Hurdle Hill Foundation  
 Anonymous

Ipswich Bay Glass  
 Jay-By Engineering  
 Jeff Runnion Associates  
 Jim Brady Associates  
 Johnson Quarry, Rockport  
 Nancy Chailfour, Painting  
 NBC News  
 New Meadows Garden Club  
 New Meadows Golf Club  
 Maestranzi Brothers  
 McGraw Hill Company  
 Nisus Corporation  
 Nutter-Cognac, Contractors  
 Osram Sylvania  
 Pingree School Services  
 Priscilla Capen Herb Society  
 Proctor School Children

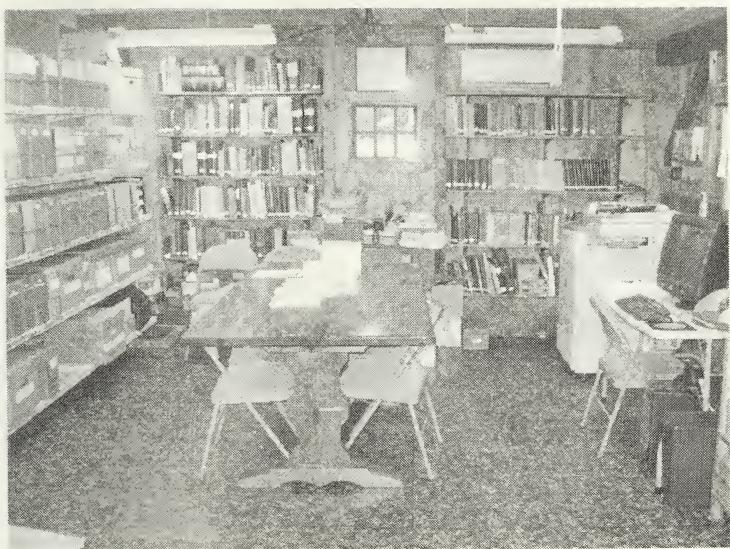
Red Pine Tree Farm	WR Cargill Insurance Co.
RE Thompson Company	Topsfield Rotary Club
Topsfield Business Council	Topsfield Cultural Council
Topsfield Fair	Topsfield Garden Club
Topsfield House of Pizza	Topsfield Lions Club
Town Crier Real Estate	

At this writing the barn has been in use for some ten years. In 2006, a typical year, it was rented to 40 private parties and made available to 23 community organizations, some at no charge. Gross income in 2006 was \$15,645.00. And perhaps most important, the attendance at Society meetings has far exceeded what was possible in private homes.

The preservation and accumulation of historical records, a prime reason for the Society's existence, has been greatly improved in the Records Room in the barn. This facility is now climate controlled to better protect our records. It is equipped with a computer, with an office grade copying machine, and a start has been made to integrate our records with those in the Town Library, the Town Hall, and the Phillips Library in Salem. All these features are far beyond what could be done in the former Capen House Library.

Since the barn is used for meetings of all kinds, its museum type displays must necessarily be limited to wall space displays. These include a musket dating from the Revolutionary War, a flag flown over the East School in 1794, a quilt made by the ladies of Topsfield in connection with the 325<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the town's incorporation, a political banner from the 1856 election, and an exhibit of Indian artifacts and shoes made in Topsfield in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is hoped to add to the display of agricultural artifacts.

Thus Joseph Gould's barn is once again getting good use some 300 years after it was first built although for a different purpose.



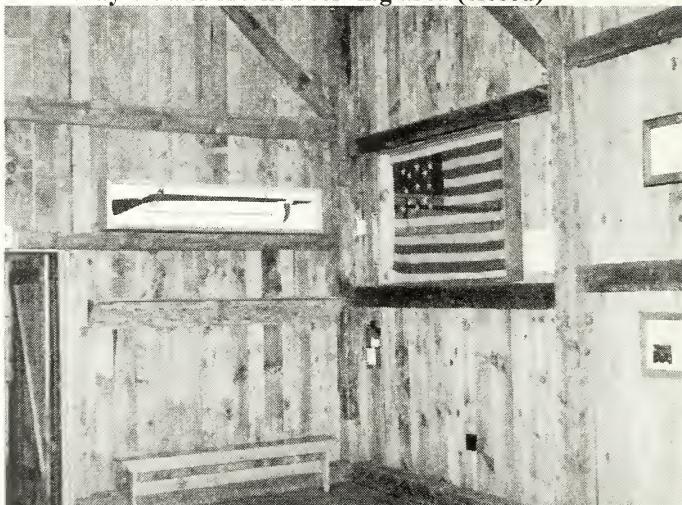
**The Records Room**



**The Storage Room**



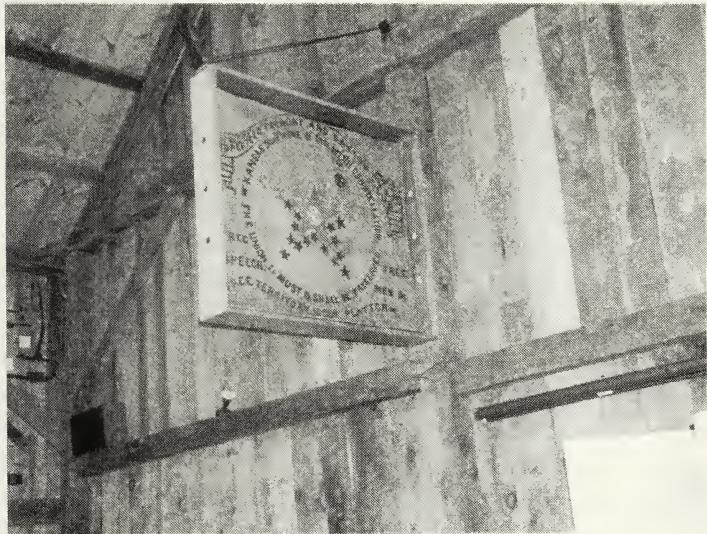
**Hayloft and kitchen serving area (closed)**



**Revolutionary War gun and 1794 flag**



**Kitchen**



**The Fremont banner from the 1856 election**

## **HISTORY OF THE MASCONOMET REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

By Donald Doliber, Assistant Principal Masconomet High School

The Masconomet Regional School District is comprised of three scenic, suburban communities – Boxford, Middleton, and Topsfield. These towns are former agricultural communities that have used their plentiful open space to attract business and in large part upper-middle class professional families.

In the years before 1950, the three communities recognized the need for quality education and started the process of a regional educational experience. In the early 1950s Topsfield voted down a regional proposal to join with Hamilton-Wenham and Manchester. Students from Middleton attended schools in Danvers for the ninth grade and Salem for the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades. Boxford went to Georgetown, Andover, North Andover, and Topsfield schools. Topsfield students were enrolled at the Proctor School.

The regional experience offered the communities many opportunities. Towns would now have a direct voice, through representation, in the running of their own junior and high school. Young people could receive the use of more advanced educational facilities, more sports opportunities, and enriched courses of study. Each town school committee appointed three regional planning committee members to propose a regional agreement for the voters' approval. Boxford chose Rosamond L. Lord, Franklin Roberts, and Richard Bowler, Jr. Middleton selected Richard E. Quinn, Robert T. Sperry, and Rosamond B. Bastable. Topsfield appointed J. Harrison Holman, John Robertson, and Godfrey G. Torrey. On February 7, 1956, the newly created Regional School Committee from Boxford, Topsfield, and Middleton met at the home of J. Harrison Holman to discuss building plans. These individuals drew up a proposed regional agreement, which was approved, by the state on August 9, 1956. An informational booklet with the agreement,

recommendations, and question-answer facts was sent to each household in the Tri-Town community. At simultaneous town meetings held in each community on October 1, 1956 the agreement was discussed and voted in the affirmative. Town meeting approval indicated overwhelming support: Boxford - 252 to 15, Middleton- 335 to 59, and Topsfield- 446 to 81.

On November 7, 1956 the local school superintendents Johnson, Dower, and Smith worked with the new Regional Committee and the School Building Assistance Commission on Educational Specifications to develop plans. In January 1957 the Regional Committee took an option to purchase land subject to the land engineer's approval. The same month, the architectural firm of Rich and Associates was retained after a four-month search for an architect. On May 22, 1957 Mr. C. Newton Heath, Superintendent of Schools in Stoneham, was selected as an educational building consultant.

On July 1, 1957 the first piece of land (thirty-eight acres known as Indian Head Farm) on Endicott Road in Boxford. was officially purchased from Mr. and Mrs. Frederick McComiskey for \$27,500. This location was at a point closest to each of the three town boundaries. No sooner had the land been purchased than the Regional Committee on July 8, 1957 hired Mr. Julius Mueller as Educational Consultant, and on August 1, 1958 as Superintendent-Principal.

By January 1958 the Massachusetts School Building Assistance Commission gave the final approval to the architectural plans submitted. On February 13, 1958, E.H. Porter of Peabody, Massachusetts, the lowest bidder, was approved. The state gave approval to the bond issue in March, 1958, and E. H. Porter signed the building contract for the contract price of \$1,816, 381.

On April 14, 1958, local town officials and regional school committee members held the groundbreaking ceremonies.

Construction at the site began immediately in April 1958. Samuel Crabtree was selected as the Equipment Consultant and William L. Danforth served as the Clerk of the Works. In May 1958, the district bonds (twenty-year issue) sold at low interest rate of 3 percent.

The first Masconomet Regional School Committee was composed of the following members:

<b>Boxford</b>	<b>Middleton</b>	<b>Topsfield</b>
Merton Barrows	Rosamond Bastable	J. Harrison Holman (Chm)
Richard Bowler, Jr. (Sec)	Richard Quinn (V.Chm)	M. Douglas Banus
Rosamond Lord	Robert Sperry	John Robertson
Franklin Roberts		George Torrey
Louis Vrettos		

Superintendent Mueller assumed his duties immediately and began a search for faculty members. He invited the nineteen teachers in the three towns whose jobs were to be abolished by the opening of the school to be interviewed. Mr. Rodney C. Dresser, Principal of the Proctor School (Topsfield), was selected as an Assistant Principal. Mr. Mueller drove all over New England to observe and to interview various applicants. In one incident, Mr. Mueller in his car slid off the Maine Turnpike twice on his way to such an interview appointment. By the end of January 1959, sixteen more faculty members were hired.

In March 1959, parents began to register their children for admission and course selection in the new school. On August 1, 1959, department chairmen worked on the course of study for the new school. On September 1, 1959 all new teachers were in the building preparing for the opening of school.

In 1959, selected students (listed below) with the newly hired superintendent, Julius Mueller, served as the Student Steering Committee which made decisions about the planning of and the running of the school.

**Boxford:**

Rodney Chadwick  
 Martha Jane Meeker  
 Herbert L. Vrettos

**Middleton:**

Donna Jeanice Coffin  
 Kenneth Charles Hackett  
 Robert Daniel Leary  
 Barry T. Stevens

**Topsfield:**

Douglas Peter King  
 Leland Mann

From September 9 to 11, 1959 student orientation were conducted in half-day sessions. On September 14, 1959 seven hundred and fifty students and fifty-two staff members entered the main school building. A Student Planning Committee of nineteen students ran the academic year (1959-1960) from grades 9-12.

On Wednesday, January 28, 1957 the Regional School Committee cast ballots six times and finally selected the name Masconomet for the new school district. Other names such as "Harmony" and "Sacagawea" after a local camp name were some of the names considered. The proper pronunciation is MAS-CON-OM-ET.

The formal dedication ceremony was held on Sunday, October 18, 1959 at the school. Dr. Asa S. Knowles, President, Northeastern University of Boston gave an address. A souvenir program was presented to each person who attended the occasion.

Masconomet (Masconomo, Maskanomet, Musquanomenit), Sachem of the Agawam tribe (Ipswich-Gloucester-Tri-Town area) was noted for his friendly cooperation with the early European settlers who inhabited the North Shore area of Massachusetts. In 1637 Chief Masconomet sold all his lands in Ipswich to John Winthrop, Jr. A second deed was signed in 1638 for the sum of twenty pounds.

Thousands of years of the local Native American encampments occurred on and near the location of the school facilities. This area located along the banks of the Ipswich River and the Fish brook stream was a perfect work area particularly for their summer encampments. A collection of Native American artifacts of the

Agawam tribe (most from the Cyrus Killam collection) found on the property is exhibited at the Masconomet Regional High School. In the 1970s archaeology classes under professional supervision uncovered artifacts, which were added to the Killam collection.

School sports teams are called the "Chieftains" in honor of the Sachem of the Agawams. In 1999, the name "Masconomet" was registered as a trademark.

### **Building Phases of the School District**

#### **Phase I (April 1958- September 14, 1959)**

The main two-story building which housed a cafeteria and auditorium plus an attached gymnasium was constructed. Athletic fields were laid out in 1959-1960. The architect was Rich, Phinney, Lang, and Cote of Boston, Massachusetts. The builder was E. H. Porter Construction Co. of Peabody, Massachusetts. The gross cost of the project was \$2, 220,000.



**Masconomet High School in 1959**

In 1961 the three towns approved \$75,000 to develop plans for a separate Junior High wing . Plans originally called for the new addition to house a population of 850 students, but this was reduced to 700 students. The wing would be attached in order to share specialized and core facilities. A recommendation was made to purchase 25-30 more acres in case two separate buildings needed to be built in the future. This last recommendation was not accepted.

A 1961-1962 Master Long Range Plan called for a central library, improved science labs, and a central cafeteria. (Adopted April, 1963 by the School Committee)

**Phase II (July 2,1963-November 16,1964):**

Increased school numbers caused a junior high (Grades 7-8) wing and rooms attached by a glass corridor to be added to the main building. The new wing was occupied in 1964, but the occupancy of the field house was held up by the installation of its floor. The architects were Rich & Tucker Associates of Boston, Massachusetts . The builder was Frasca Construction of Lynn, Massachusetts. The gross cost was \$1, 875,000. The bond rate for new construction was at the low interest rate of 3 per cent, identical to original bond issue.

A new athletic field (two acre area near the end of the football field was made from the fill taken in the construction of the JHS wing) was ready in spring 1965.

There was a major water seepage problem in 1965/1966. Water from the showers ran under the locker floor into the gymnasium floor. The wooden floor broke and buckled. Openings were made in the wall to determine if the damage was caused by roof damage. Henry B. Byors Plumbing Contractors of Marblehead, Massachusetts completed new piping and showerheads, for

\$4,785.72. The new gym floor was installed by Republic Floors, Inc. of Braintree, Massachusetts, for \$14,690. Total cost for the damages was \$19,376.

A 1966 proposal (called the Master plan addition) called for an expanded cafeteria, new library, several new classrooms, and an administrative office in the JHS wing, expanded PE facilities, and an updated boiler room. The architect was Warren H. Ashley of West Hartford, CT. A special school committee building committee requested a bond issue of \$2,750,000 from the February town meetings. Boxford town meeting supported the bond, Topsfield rejected it, and Middleton never had the opportunity to vote on the issue.

On March 15, 1968, the bond issue was re-submitted to town meetings. The 1968 booklet entitled "The Next Step for Masconomet" was sent to each voter with the plans. At the March 19th town meetings, the bond was again defeated. Boxford voted yes and Topsfield and Middleton voted no. The school administration had to make arrangements to handle the overcrowding which led to double sessions in the Junior High School.

In November 1968, at special town meetings, \$93,000 was approved to draw up new plans. A group looked at the Maryknoll Novitiate site in Topsfield as a possible JHS location, but this alternative was rejected. Town approval came for 21 more classrooms, new library, expanded cafe and PE facilities, and a new boiler room. In November 1969 ground was broken for Phase III construction.

### **Phase III (November 1969-1972):**

A new expanded field house, library, and cafeteria plus rooms in the J and K wings met the further increased student enrollment. Some classrooms were ready in the fall of 1970, but the floor of

the field house was held up in a yearlong litigation over bidding procedures. Gross costs were \$2,146,423.

In 1973-1974 the Massachusetts Highway Department widened Route 95. Endicott Road needed to be improved and thus part of the front horseshoe area and the highway side property was taken by the state. A snow fence was installed during the construction. Major maintenance called for the replacement of the roof on the main building in 1980-1981. W.S. Aiken of Salem, Massachusetts, the second lowest bidder, was given the job for \$599, 640.

In 1987 a new bond issue allowed for new boilers, roof gas heating units, an emergency generator, a new roof, a new fuel tank, new gym bleachers, re-paved tennis courts, resurfaced parking lots, and replacement of track and baseball field areas.

#### **Phase IV: (1999-2003)**

Increased enrollment necessitated a new three-storied high school building along side of the older 1959 building. The renovated older high school was to become the new middle school. The field house and gymnasium were to be renovated and the older junior high school was to be removed. Two new playing fields and more parking were to be added. The architectural firm was Architectural Resources of Cambridge, Massachusetts. Estimated total costs were \$54,000,000.

The Masconomet Regional School District opened bids for the new construction on December 14, 1999. Five general contractors submitted bids (all within a 5.1 % band) which were opened by Building Committee Chairman, Robert Kmetz of Topsfield, assisted by Architectural Resources of Cambridge, the firm that designed the project. The lowest bid was approximately \$39 million, well below the budgeted \$42,987,674 projection. On January 31, 2000, the ground was cleared of snow to begin work on the new high school addition. Ground breaking ceremonies

took place on February 16, 2000 at 9:00 AM. Work began immediately digging holes and moving soil.

Forms were poured and underground pipes were laid in March. On April 24, 2000 the first load of steel girders arrived on site and the next day some of the girders were upright with cross beams attached to them. On May 15, 2000 the crane used to lift the steel into place let go and crashed to the ground. This piece of apparatus missed the High School Library by twenty-three feet. No injuries took place, but an eighteen-wheel truck loaded with steel had its cab crushed in.



**Masconomet Regional High School entrance**

On the second day of school in September 2000, the construction company hit an eighteen-inch high-pressure gas main next to the occupied High School (C-Wing). The entire wing was evacuated and moved to Trinity Church. There were no injuries.

Friday, June 22, 2001 was the last day of classes in the old 1959-2001 High School. The moving of all equipment from this building was completed on Saturday, June 30, 2001. A major water leak caused by a defective sprinkler took place on July 5, 2001. Damage was done to new classrooms and some offices.

The newly renovated Middle School building (the old High School structure) opened on September 5, 2003. Cleanout of the old Junior High structure began in July, but faced labor issues with the construction workers. Officially the destruction of the old Junior High wing began on September 10th. With the removal of the Junior High wing and paving, the new student parking lot was opened when students returned in January 2003 from their winter vacation. The final connector hallway from the high school and the dining areas was finished in February 2003. All new and older fields were completed in the fall of 2003.

### **Land Acquisitions**

The Regional School Committee purchased the main plot of land (thirty- eight acres known as Indian Head Farm) from Mr. and Mrs. Frederick McComiskey for \$27,500 in July, 1957.

The Dana Killam property of twenty-five acres adjacent to the original school site was acquired for \$50,000 on May 10, 1961.

The Cyrus Killam property of 8.8 acres, adjacent to the Dana Killam parcel, was purchased for \$15,000 on January 16, 1962.

The Ronald Perley property of 7.8 acres on Rowley Bridge Road, Topsfield, was purchased for \$ 1,000. on February 7, 1962.

In July, 1963 the school committee exchanged low marshland for land from the Essex County Greenbelt Association.

The school committee accepted land transferred from Daniel R. Pinkham, abutting Endicott Road, for \$644.40 on August 10, 1964. This strip of registered land was not needed for building purposes. but allowed the buried drainpipe to be on the parking lot property.

7.9 acres of land on Rowley Bridge Road, Topsfield, were obtained from Mrs. Martha W. Ingraham of Brookline, Massachusetts in 1966. This was in exchange for 6.5 acres of river meadowland and for \$10,950. Negotiations with two other owners of twenty acres were conducted.

5.7 acres of land were obtained from Mr. and Mrs. David Lampert of Topsfield in 1966/1967 in exchange for giving up a thirty-foot right of way held by the district on their property plus \$10,000. This now gave the district 83.9 acres (21.2 acres in Topsfield and 62.7 acres in Boxford).

## **SOME INTERESTING MASCONOMET FACTS**

### **Dedicated Areas:**

The Henry Follansbee Long Auditorium is named for a Topsfield resident (1883-1956) who served as a State Commissioner of Corporations and Taxation for thirty-three years.

The Dr. Franklin C. Roberts Library is named for a former Boxford School Committee member and dedicated college educator who helped create the Masconomet Regional School District.

The Archibald Jones Gymnasium is named for a Middleton citizen (1899-1948) who served as a state representative from 1935 -1938.



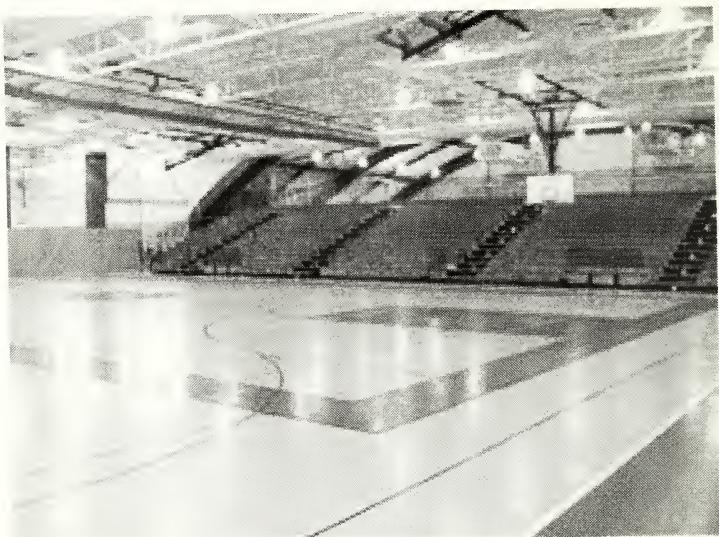
**The Henry F. Long Auditorium**



**The Dr. Franklin C. Roberts Library**



**Archibald Jones Gymnasium**



**The "Bucky" Benson Field House**

The James L. Melvin Flagpole named for a 1965 Masconomet graduate killed in Vietnam.

The Louise O. C. Swenson Science Area named for the first Masconomet Science Department Head (1959- 1974).

The Walter B. Roberts Football Field named for a former Masconomet PE teacher and football coach (1959- 1981).

The Herschal G. "Bucky" Benson Field House named for a former Masconomet PE teacher and coach (1959-1975).

### **Students killed in the service of their country**

- John D. Lawson ('62) (1944-1970) killed in aircraft explosion Phu Bay Thau, Phien Province, Vietnam on September 1, 1970.
- James L. Melvin ('65) (1947-1967) killed in action on November 26, 1967 in Vietnam.

### **Concluding Comments**

Many alumni have become pilots, architects, writers, journalists, engineers, teachers, lawyers, doctors, stockbrokers, scientists, and professional military people. Many have become noted in fields of their employment.

The school facilities are used for many purposes beside school functions. These include town athletic organizations, model town organizations, hobby groups, show groups, scouting units, sport feeder programs, sports camps, local-county-state police organizations, extension school programs, local play and orchestra groups, town meetings, and the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency.

The High School has issued an annual yearbook, *Mitobo*, since 1960. The Junior High School issued their first *Pathfinder* in 1974.

The new Masconomet buildings include 85 classrooms all of which have Internet access. There are 875 computers in the district being supported by 25 servers.

Outstanding student-athletes from Masconomet Regional High School have won the annual Salem News Student-Athlete award six times, including three of the last eight winners, to give them more victories than any other school in the area.

The total enrollment in the Middle and High School is approximately 2500 students.

## CAPEN HOUSE EVALUATION AND REPAIRS

By Jan Jansen

In 2001 the consultant firm of Finch and Rose of Beverly surveyed the condition of the Capen House to determine as fully as possible how much of the present building dates from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and what changes were made by George Francis Dow in the 1913 restoration. A very detailed report was presented to the Society by William R. Finch, dated April 1, 2002, with many photos supporting his findings. The report also recommended repairs that should be made. In a report dated October 26, 2005 Norman Isler reviewed the work that was done in fulfilling the recommendations of the Finch and Rose report. Both reports are preserved in the files of the Historical Society.

This article is a brief summary of both reports with extensive quotes from each along with some of the photographs. The study was funded by a matching grant from the Essex National Heritage Commission. The restoration and repair work was funded by grants from the General Electric Employees Good Neighbor Fund, The Stevens Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Historical Society's resources, and particularly many contributions from Topsfield people and businesses.

An appendix to the Finch report reviews ownership and occupancy details and all the work done to the Capen House for which records are available since its original construction. The chronology follows.

### **CHRONOLOGY OF IMPORTANT DATES, DOCUMENTS, AND RECENT REPAIR RECORDS**

1683 Initial construction by Rev. Joseph Capen

1725 House passes to Capen's son Nathaniel Capen; no inventory has been found.

1748 Nathaniel Capen dies in March; Inventory and Will of Nathaniel Capen.

1747-58 Series of transactions: in 1747 before the death of Nathaniel Capen half interest in the house is sold to a John Baker of Boxford, with the other passing to Baker on Capen's death in 1748. After a complex series of transactions the entire house eventually passes to John Emerson. Emerson did not live in the house, but it has been conjectured that his daughter and her husband John Baker may have occupied it.

1725-61 Major renovation of house: first period casement windows replaced with wood sash, walls sheathed and rec-lapboarded. Date range is conjectural based on changes of occupancy.

1774 Thomas Emerson inherits house and property from his father John Emerson but did not live in it based on recollections by Rev. Wm. Bentley in 1814.

1798 Emerson's property is listed in the Direct tax of 1798, but it is not clear if any of the listed buildings is the Parson Capen House.

1813 Emerson's sons Joseph and William inherit the house and property. Dow speculates the house was used to house hired farm hands.

1814 Rev. William Bentley of Salem visits Topsfield and describes the house in his diary as "nearly in its primitive state & is the place to receive the families of the men who labor on the lands around, Mr. Emerson keeping 600 acres in cultivation & use around him. Mr. Capen's house is of two stories with jutting second stories & a very sharp & high roof. The beams & joists are naked within but the floor timbers are less than usual at that time of building."

1835-86 House and property passes to Harriet Josephine Emerson Holmes and husband Charles H. Holmes. With some title complications it remains with Holmes until his death in 1886 in Maine. Holmes lived in the adjacent Averill House (then parsonage) until his wife's death in 1849 and again in the 1880's. Whether he ever lived in the Capen House is not known. During the later part of this period the house was rented by Holmes to a Mrs. Alonzo Kneeland (see 1894 entry).

1835-86 At some time during this period substantial renovations occur at the house including much replastering on circular sawn lath, the installation of ceilings on the underside of the joists, the finishing of the two attic rooms and the introduction of 6/6 sash in the 18<sup>th</sup> century openings.



**The Capen House in early 1880s.** The lean-to shack served as a vestibule for the 18<sup>th</sup> century west entry door. The arrow points to defective flashing and roofing at its junction to the gable wall were likely the cause of the extensive decay in the east girt still visible in the Hall.



**The Capen House a few years later. The arrow points to the one surviving gable bracket that is still present in the west façade. The windows have 19<sup>th</sup> century 6/6 sash in them. The house had been occupied by tenants for over 100 years at the time of this photo.**

1886-1913 Ownership of the house is cloudy.

1894 Description of the house and drawing of exterior in Essex County Mercury Weekly Salem Gazette. Article states house has been occupied by Mrs. Alonzo Kneeland for the past 40 years (since c.1854) and describes the house as having three rooms within each of the original two first floor rooms, six rooms on the second floor “finished in modern style” and two finished rooms in the attic.

1913 House acquired by Topsfield Historical Society and restored by George Francis Dow. William Sumner Appleton visits the house on October 5 and 13, 1913 taking photographs and making a few written notes of the work in progress. Photographs and a few pages of correspondence are in the SPNEA Archives.



**The Capen House shortly after the restoration. The clapboards and trim were left to weather naturally, and did not receive any opaque finishes until the current treatment of dark brown stain was initiated in the 1970s.**

1914            March 9 letter from Dow to Appleton responding to questions as to the evidence for the drops and brackets, the water table, and chimney. March 14 letter of Appleton to architect W.D. Austin of 50 Bromfield Street, Boston regarding the incomplete state of measured drawings of the house that Austin was preparing showing the house frame. These drawings have never been located unless they became the ones eventually done by Donald Millar.

1916            Drawings of the house as restored by Dow were published in a portfolio titled *Measured Drawings of Some Colonial and Georgian Houses* by Donald Millar, the Architectural Book Publishing Company, New York City. All other drawings of the house derive from these, including the Historic American Building Society drawings. The set of blueprints of Millar's drawings owned by the HABS has a substantial error in the width of the chimney bay as drawn. The published drawings are correct.

1920 Article by Donald Millar on the Restoration of the Capen House published in Old-Time New England, the journal of SPNEA. The same article was also published in the Architectural Record.

1924 Reproductions of the hall and stair hall constructed as period rooms in the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art's American Wing with assistance by Dow.

1935 Publication of Everyday Life in the Massachusetts Bay Colony by Dow, which included photographs of the restored Capen House.

1935-7 Photographs of the exterior taken for the Historic American Building Survey.

1936 Death of George Francis Dow

1938 One page of a 3 page letter to Miss Susan Hoke Eisenhart from William Sumner Appleton regarding the Capen House questioning the concept closing in the front over- hang with a board, and discussing the lack of evidence for Dow's window restoration beyond perhaps a single casement sash at the Essex Institute with rectangular lights.

1946 Unspecified "repairs" for \$65.75 by E. M. Dow (G. F. Dow's brother who was a local contractor )

1947 Work to oil burner and pumping out cellar.

1950 Shingle and clapboard work for \$800 by E.M. Dow; paint and whitewashing work by Elmer Foye.



**The Capen House in 1936 after it had weathered for 23 years without paint. The rear shed was replaced in 1974. The furnace chimney, a tall brick stack, was reduced in height in 1999 and covered by clapboards. It was taken down some years later when the Capen House furnace was removed as recommended by Finch.**

1958-59 Estimates for repairs to house including new roof with cedar shakes rather than shingles, west basement framing, regrading north wall, renailing loose clapboards, and repairs to rear shed. It is not clear how much was actually done such as the roof. Architect Jack Peirce was involved. \$817.16 spent.

1960 Work rebuilding the rear shed possibly including staining of house; \$539.46.

1964 Major renovation of second floor caretaker's apartment. Specifications and set of plans were drawn by Jack Peirce showing second floor before and after the work. Specs also called for some other work including capping chimney with copper, applying Dow silicone to it and the first floor fireplace bricks. Some of the specified work does not appear to have been done.

1962 Report of the House Committee that "there were indications of some settling in a section of the house foundation" that was to receive further investigation.

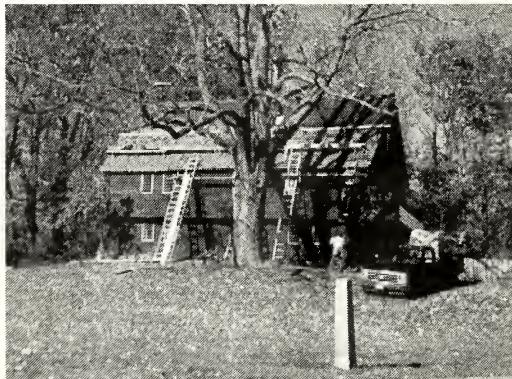
1964 May 22 report on condition of house from restoration contract of Philip W. Baker of Antrim N.H. (related to Roy Baker) included recommendation to replace the east sill. There is no indication Baker was hired to do the recommended work.

1971 Repairs by John Lebel of Danvers to parge interior of chimney flues to 2nd floor ceiling, parge exterior in attic and remove cooper cap installed in 1964 including state of 2nd floor fire boxes reported in Jack Peirce memo.

1974 Plans and specifications by Jack Peirce for rebuilding rear shed with work done by Contractor William A. Berry and Son of Danvers.

1975 Massachusetts Historical Commission grant for repairs, clapboard replacement and painting to exterior, and replacement of furnace to specifications by SPNEA Consulting Services architect David Hart.

1979 Fumigation for powder post beetles by a Mr. Hogan for \$1,240.



Replacing  
the Capen  
House  
roof

1998        Re-roofing of house with red cedar shakes by Aaron Sturgis of Eliot, Maine. The tall brick furnace chimney was replaced by a shorter steel stack encased with plywood and clapboards.

The Finch and Rose report is a lengthy document of 45 pages. It goes into great detail on the condition of the Capen House and an evaluation of what is left of the 17<sup>th</sup> century house along with an evaluation of the restoration by George Francis Dow in 1913. The report also suggests what the Society might do to increase its conformity to 17<sup>th</sup> century norms and to improve its museum-like qualities to better serve as a teaching tool. Summarizing the study goes beyond the scope of this presentation, rather the reader is advised to study the Finch and Rose report itself instead. The final section of the report is worth reproducing in its entirety however.

### **“SIGNIFICANCE AND INTERPRETATION ISSUES”**

This study has confirmed that much of Dow's 1913 restoration is by today's standards of scholarship highly inaccurate and dated. Dow was concerned equally with providing an effective stage set for his concepts about 17th century life, and with preserving actual 17th century historic fabric. Where the fabric was missing or inscrutable, he apparently had no problem inventing it to create the desired overall effect. Today we are biased towards the preservation of historic fabric and recreating missing features only when we believe there is sound evidence based on a building archeology approach and accurate documentation.

Dow's restoration of the Capen House effectively preserved the essential first period components of the house that had survived up to 1913 such as the exposed frame of the ceilings and walls, the bracket on the west gable, and the clay insulation below the parlor floor. The other brackets and drops restored on the exterior are based on reasonably sound evidence. Without his efforts the house probably would not have even survived at all.

On the other hand, in the spaces that are restored, he removed all materials that were not obviously from the first period without recording them, and provided new finishes such as the ubiquitous unpainted feather edged sheathing that is not remotely accurate to the 17th century but created the atmosphere he sought. The windows are an adaptation of 17th century glazing applied to the 18th century openings and the application of clapboards and trim generally follows 18th century practice rather than the 17th century. The restored features are in some cases, such as the sheathing, identical to his restoration two years earlier of the John Ward House at the Essex Institute, and he used many of the same contractors in both restorations.

In Dow's time, both the Ward House and the Capen House were widely publicized as outstanding and perfect examples of restoration to the 17th century. The Capen House hall and stair hall were duplicated as period rooms in New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art where they remained on display until the period rooms displays were reinterpreted a few years ago. The house has been featured as a primary example of the first period in most 20th century architectural history texts. Photographs of the interior and exterior by Samuel Chamberlain have popularized the image created by Dow in many publications since the 1930's.

In evaluating the significance of the Parson Capen House and determining appropriate future interpretation there are two distinct themes. One is clearly the preserved first period fabric, such as the frame along with the general exterior form of the house, which is accurate to the 17th century. Considered by itself this fabric has a high degree of integrity and warrants its status as one of the primary surviving examples in the country.

The other theme is the restored features and overall effect of the house created by Dow in 1913 as a primary example of Dow's substantial influence on the early 20th century preservation movement. Other than the application of paint on the exterior and

the newer clapboards, the restored portions of the house remain essentially as presented by Dow in 1913.

Most of the other houses restored by Dow are either in private hands where they have undergone considerable further change, or are owned by institutions that are not actively interpreting them. In the case of the John Ward House, the Peabody-Essex Museum is considering a major re-restoration of the building that would substantially alter Dow's interpretation.

Most other first period Essex County houses that were restored as museum structures in the early 20th century have been repeatedly restored and reinterpreted so that they no longer convey their initial "restored" image. Examples include the Whipple House in Ipswich, the Balch House in Beverly, and the Claflin House in Wenham, where the initial interpretations were substantially changed by Roy Baker in the 1950's. In these cases further reinterpretation to make their presentation more accurate in the light of current scholarship would be justifiable as long as the changes do not destroy significant early fabric.

In the case of the Capen House, any effort to reinterpret Dow's "mistakes" will simply be another stage set based on our current understanding of period typical features, because there is not sufficient evidence in the house for a more accurate restoration of most features. The limited aspects that could easily be redone with more accuracy, such as the details of clapboard and trim installation, will simply muddy the interpretive waters if a significant part of what is being presented is Dow's interpretation.

It is therefore recommended that the Society's interpretation should focus both on the actual first period frame, and on presenting the restored aspects of the house as an intact example of Dow's vision and the early 20th century attitude towards 17th century America. The unrestored parlor chamber should be left largely as is and used as gallery space. The hall chamber could be used as a study room

by removing some of the plaster finishes to expose the unrestored frame and ceiling and displaying interpretive panels about Dow's restoration and first period architecture. The current bathroom and kitchen fixtures in the rear should be removed to get the plumbing out of the museum portions of the house. These spaces could then be reconfigured as a museum shop and storage area. On the exterior, the underside of the overhang should be left open to expose the framing, as Dow initially treated it. Although not critical, it would be desirable to eventually restore the exterior to Dow's original interpretation of unpainted, weathered oak clapboards and trim.

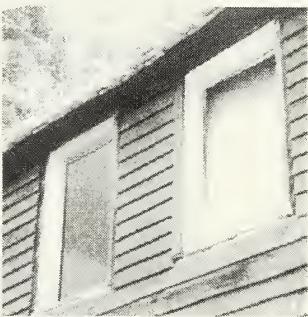
The 1913 restoration work included converting the upstairs rooms in the house into a custodian's apartment, and, over the years, between 1914 and 1972, it was occupied by a series of custodians. When the Town Library was expanded in 1972, however, the Topsfield Room was eliminated to make room for additional stacks. At that point all the artifacts were moved to the Capen House into the space that had served as the custodian apartment. Thus the kitchen/bath facilities and the heating system in the house were no longer required. The Finch report recommended their removal, which agrees with a tentative long standing goal of the Society to convert the space into an area featuring Topsfield history. Having an on-site custodian is nevertheless very desirable, however, and some thought and preliminary thinking has been directed towards building a separate studio apartment for such a person(s). Since the Capen House is open only during the summer, heating is unnecessary, and, for many other reasons, better eliminated.

The findings and recommendations of the Finch and Rose consulting firm were implemented soon after their report was released. It began with a fund raising campaign after cost estimates for the several projects had been assembled. The original cost estimate, made in June 2003, came to \$43,786. After a few details of the project were either eliminated or paired back,

the final estimate came to \$30,650. The reductions involved extensive use of materials on hand and the use of volunteer labor (mostly Norman Isler and William Whiting) in place of contract labor for certain tasks. The actual cost came to about \$23,000. not counting the cost of removing the kitchen/bath facilities and the heating system, or any major changes in the design of the upstairs rooms. As stated, the funding came from several foundations, and businesses and people of Topsfield.

The report by Norman Isler describes in detail the repairs that were made in response to the Finch recommendations. The following is a brief summary of the work that was done.

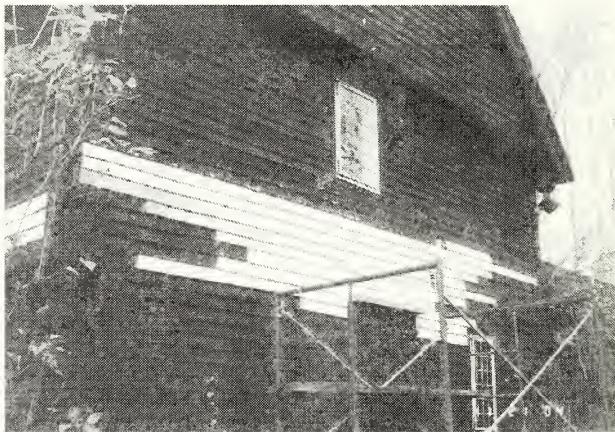
**1. WINDOWS** A number of window sashes required repair or replacement of the bottom member due to squirrel damage from chewing and some second floor trim boards were weathered beyond repair. Squirrels got into the building either by way of the chimney or through unintended left open windows. They then chewed window frames in an effort to escape.



Window trim removed

**2. CLAPBOARDS AND TRIM** Clapboard siding replacement fell into two categories: One, replacement because of clapboards being removed to gain structural repair access that were consequentially not reusable; and two, selective clapboard replacement due to their severely weathered condition. Inspection of the house's siding disclosed at least three different types had been used at different periods. Hand split white oak appears to have been Dow's choice and is characterized by short lengths of 5 to 6 feet, scarfed joints and rough surface finish. Machined cedar clapboards were also found, characterized by longer lengths, smooth finish and butt joints. A third type was pine, similar to the cedar.

Attempts were made with cedar clapboards to produce the surface texture of the white oak variety by rough sanding, propane torching, steam and a special file but none of these techniques proved satisfactory. White oak clapboards had always been felt to be the best replacement choice and finally a mill in Maine was located that had a white oak log about six feet long and a foot in diameter that was radially sawn to produce about 550 linear feet of clapboard, sufficient to cover both replacement categories. The surface was rough sanded to remove the circular saw marks and the ends scarfed. The accompanying photo shows one location where the siding was replaced. It is recommended that any future siding replacement be made with the white oak variety.



**Replaced siding on east side following structural repairs**

The fragile condition of the house became evident while replacing the clapboards. The initial plan was to replace all the clapboards having butt ends with ones having scarfed ends as well as replacing those having a smooth finish. A decision was made, however, to minimize the extent of the replacement due to the fragile nature of the house. This over-ruled the desire to have the house more closely resemble the appearance supposedly desired by Dow; namely to have short white oak clapboards with scarfed ends.

The initial plan to restain the entire house was reconsidered in light of limited clapboard replacement and the fact that the newly stained boards closely matched the existing stain.

**3. CHIMNEY REBUILDING** The chimney was in poor condition with spalled bricks and mortar that was incompatible with the bricks. Pieces of both brick and mortar were failing off with some landing on the front door entranceway creating a personnel hazard. The chimney had clearly deteriorated beyond its useful life and was in need of complete replacement from the roof line up. In addition, flue dampers, which had been installed about ten years ago, had been sized much smaller than the flue openings by the installer, thus causing poor draft in what had previously been properly drawing flues.

Against this background, a search was made to locate a mason contractor experienced in Colonial era masonry. At the suggestion of Aaron Sturgis, Rod Bishop, a mason from Connecticut experienced in early American masonry, was invited to inspect the chimney and subsequently hired to totally replace the chimney from just below the roof line up. Precautions were taken to prevent the possibility of roof damage from both the removal of the old chimney and construction of the new chimney. We show a photo of the scaffolding along with a picture of the finished chimney.

Morin Restoration brick was chosen as being the closest available to the existing brick in size, color and texture. Lime based mortar was used which was both historically appropriate and compatible with the chosen brick. As the old masonry was removed two additional flues were uncovered, one at either end of the chimney. They had been covered with copper plates. This confirmed what had long been suspected: that in 1913 when Dow installed the steam radiator heating system, he walled off the two upstairs fireplaces. As part of the restoration effort these two flues were again sealed with copper plates. Flue dampers were installed in the working flues that were properly sized and they now draw as was

intended by the original builders. The dampers are operated by stainless steel cables running down the flues into the fireplaces. The new flue linings were mated with the existing linings so that the joints are virtually invisible.



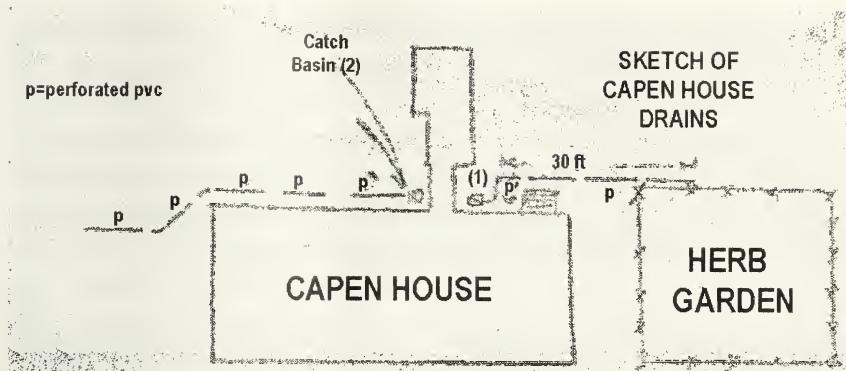
Chimney scaffolding



The finished chimney

**4. SITE DRAINAGE** Although the Capen House is located near the top of a knoll, there is a rise in the terrain at the rear of the property which allows surface water to drain towards the rear of the house, leading to dampness in both cellar holes which can then infiltrate the rest of the house. In addition, there was no gravel fill next to the rear sill so that moisture tended to be retained by the soil thus adding to the problem. Since the house has no gutters any rain or snow falling on the rear roof would ultimately collect in this area with no runoff, thus adding to the moisture problem. At the furnace chimney foundation, a low pocket existed which tended to hold surface water, which had rotted out the water table board on both sides of the chimney with the rot extending into the sill beam.

To correct this long standing drainage problem two French drains were installed as shown in the following sketch by Norman Isler. Prior to beginning work, several test holes were dug to verify the location of the underground power and telephone cables that had been installed years ago to eliminate the unsightly and inappropriate overhead cables then being used. The left drain's



depth was dictated by these cables' depth at the left rear corner of the house. Both drains began with two catch basins installed at the location of roof runoff from the valleys on either side of the library stairwell. Four inch diameter perforated PVC pipe was then laid in one foot deep by two feet wide trenches dug along the house rear wall which were then lined with heavy duty plastic sheeting and back filled with 3/4inch double washed gravel. Regular PVC pipe was then used to lead out to the ground surface, one towards Howlett Street and the other alongside the herb garden fence.

Upon the consultant's recommendation, all water containing systems in the house were removed as a precaution against potential water damage to either the house or its contents. Indeed, sometime ago a water line leading up to the second floor in the right gable end of the house did freeze and burst, thus attesting to the validity of the recommendation. The condition was fortunately discovered before any significant damage occurred.

**5. BASEMENT DAMPNESS** To carry out the consultant's recommendation the furnace, oil burner, oil tank, steam radiators, kitchen and bathroom sinks, toilet and all associated piping were removed. Heating pipe holes in the second floor were plugged. The water supply was turned off by the Topsfield Water Department at the junction of the house branch line with the 4 inch

main coming in from Howlett Street to the Gould Barn. The water meter was also removed by the department.

Plaster damage in the second floor display room which was likely caused by dampness was repaired and the room repainted. Basement debris was removed to a dumpster which was also used for old brick and mortar from the replaced chimney.

High levels of humidity existed in the cellar holes, particularly the left hole which had a dirt floor. Scattered debris was also present in the left cellar thus adding to the problem. The debris was removed and a decision made to pour a concrete floor over a plastic moisture barrier to eliminate the dirt floor as a moisture source. It was recognized that the pouring would alter the original fabric of the cellar hole. However, it was felt that, on balance, it was a better approach than to leave moisture bearing soil in place.

On very humid summer days beads of moisture still formed on the cellar first floor beams and floor board underside, even after pouring the concrete floor. A large capacity dehumidifier was purchased and installed in the left cellar. The dehumidifier had its own pump whose discharge was routed outside through the oil tank fill pipe hole left in the foundation when the tank was removed. A significant reduction in humidity immediately occurred. However, no improvement in the right cellar hole was seen even though both cellars are connected by a small air space. As a result, a second dehumidifier identical to the first was purchased for the right cellar with its discharge routed through the bulkhead. The humidity in both cellar holes can now be controlled. However, both machines must be drained and turned off in the Fall and this task should be added to the house maintenance list. Inspection of both basements since these improvements has shown them to be much dryer than before.

**6. STRUCTURAL DAMAGE** As noted in the consultant's report, the overhanging front girt above the kitchen summer beam was

deeply rotted. The framework above the right side kitchen door also had been damaged by insect activity. In addition, the right rear water table was rotted due to poor drainage near the rear furnace chimney. The front door threshold was cracked and the sill area underneath was partially rotted. These particular areas were selected for immediate attention with the other areas such as moderate sagging of attic purlins put on watch for signs of new movement or deterioration.



Examples of damage found in the Capen House

Aaron Sturgis visited the site and prepared a cost estimate for the front girt and right side area above the kitchen door. Following an on-site review he was selected as having demonstrated expertise, reasonable cost and good reliability in working with old, fragile structures such as the Capen House. New white oak timbers were spliced into existing areas of the frame after the rotted areas had been chiseled out. The front door sill was treated with preservative and a new threshold fabricated.

**7. ELECTRICAL SYSTEM UPDATE** Although not included in the consultant's report the electrical system was found to be in serious need of updating and verification that no safety issues existed for either the house or personnel. Upon inspection no outlets were available in the left cellar and exposed wires were found.

Outlets were added in both cellars with dedicated circuits in anticipation of adding dehumidifiers. All outlets were tested for

grounding and polarity and each branch circuit megger checked for 5000 ohms. The fused panel was checked for proper fuse sizes and the grounding electrode reconnected.

## SUMMARY

As a result of the Finch and Rose study, the Historical Society has gained a much better understanding of the Capen House. The study clarified how much of the building dates from the 17<sup>th</sup> century as well as the physical condition of the house in 2002. Finch found several areas where the George Francis Dow restoration of 1913 departed from the original design in favor of what Dow liked to see in a 17<sup>th</sup> century house. Nevertheless, but for Dow's work, the house might not have survived to this day.

Finally, President Norman Isler acted promptly to repair the damaged areas uncovered by Finch, first by organizing a fund raising campaign, secondly by lining up contractors to do the major repair work, and finally by personally accomplishing many tasks with the aid of very few volunteers.

## DEDICATION OF THE MEMORIAL TO THE TO THE WITCHCRAFT VICTIMS

1992 marked the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the witchcraft hysteria when three women of the Topsfield parish were hanged. Elizabeth How and Sarah Wildes were hanged on July 19, 1692 and Mary Esty was hanged on September 22, 1692. The Topsfield Historical Society and the Town of Topsfield conducted a special program on the Common on Memorial Day, May 25, 1992 to honor these three victims by dedicating a monument in their memory . While it was a bright sunny day, it was also one of the coldest Memorial Days in memory.

The following citizens served on the Topsfield Witchcraft Tercentenary Committee:

Joseph Bateman	John Kimball
Rebecca Bateman	Dorothy Leach
Joyce Bergsten	Anne Peirce
Ann Costanza	Sheila Rounds
Jane Flannagan	

### PROGRAM

#### Bell Tolling

The bell of the Congregational Church will toll in memory of those innocents who died in 1692.

Welcome by Joseph Bateman, Tercentenary Committee Chairman

Introduction of Essayist by Joyce Bergsten

Amanda Jones, a student at Masconomet Regional High School, had written the winning essay.

“Remembering and Learning” by Amanda Jones

Remarks by John Kimball

Removal of the pall over the monument by Anne Peirce

Final remarks by Joseph Bateman.

Bell tolling in memory of the three Topsfield parish women.

### THE ESSAY BY AMANDA JONES

This year marks the three-hundredth year since the beginning of the witchcraft hysteria in Essex County. In the spring of 1692, after a long and hard winter filled with intriguing stories of voodoo told by their servant, Tituba, two girls of Old Salem Village, Elizabeth Parris, age nine, and Abigail Williams, age eleven, became afflicted with mysterious symptoms. They developed seizures and made strange noises, brought upon, said a local doctor, by a witch's curse. The girls named Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne, two unpopular local women, as well as their servant as their tormentors. Tituba escaped punishment through claiming to be similarly affected by the two other women; Sarah Osborne died in prison; but Sarah Good was hanged on July nineteenth, 1692. During the next three months, times of severe cruelty and ignorance, one hundred sixty people were accused of witchcraft, nineteen were hanged, and one was pressed to death for refusing to plead, all based upon the accusations of a few young girls: accusations that today would have been dismissed as childish games and fantasy. Thinking of the suffering that these one hundred sixty must have felt, one can feel only shame for the stupidity with which the Salem and Topsfield citizens reacted to the childish accusations of the girls.

It may seem odd, then, that we choose Memorial Day to remember these people. After all, the people we usually honor on this day are our loved ones; those who fought or died for a cause they felt was right; heroes who are lauded and honored for their courage. Today we celebrate our pride and love for these men and women. Why, then would we choose to place into this category twenty people who suffered the death of criminals, not really understanding what it was

that they had done wrong, in a time and place so far removed from our own that our nation did not even exist yet?

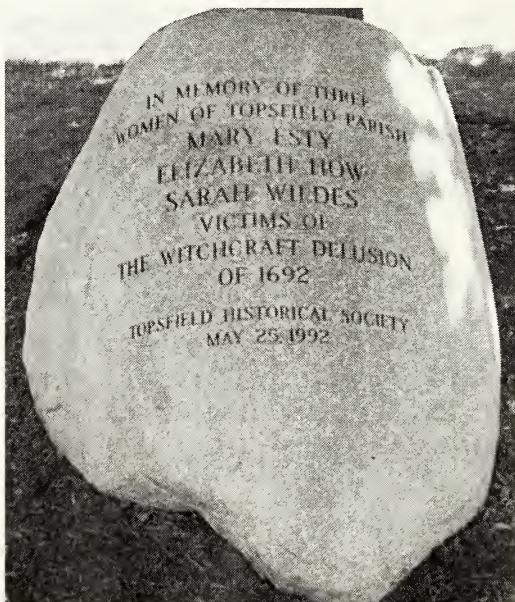
In order to understand why this day was chosen, we must realize the reason, besides remembrance, why we celebrate Memorial Day; that reason is to learn. We think about the brave servicemen and women and why they died, and in remembering them and our pain at their loss, we hope and pray that this remembrance will teach the world not to fight anymore, to avoid this senseless loss of lives. In remembering the twenty condemned “witches,” we remember that there are other ways to suffer at the hands of humans besides war. The people accused of witchcraft were the victims of the politics of small, isolated communities, where petty hatreds and misunderstandings could easily become the basis for accusation. It is interesting and important to note the names of the accusers and accused. Mary Esty, Rebecca Nurse, Sarah Cloyce, Elizabeth How, and Sarah Wildes, all convicted and executed, were members of families involved in a fierce and long-standing land dispute with the influential Putnam family of Salem Village. Ann Putnam, age twelve, was one of the afflicted children.

The accused men and women also suffered from the ignorance of their peers. There was so much about the world that the colonists did not understand. If the explanation that a witch had cursed these girls was a far-fetched one, it was certainly better than living the fear of not knowing why the girls had behaved the way they did. Who knows if these girls understood what they were doing, when they made their accusations? Even children can be cruel, and vengeful, towards someone who is hateful to them, who won't let them have their own way, or even someone who is just different.

We hope that this example of the dangers of human cruelty and ignorance, which can be and have been repeated so often in our history, will touch people and teach them to stop thoughtless prejudice before it spirals out of their control, as it did in the case of these young girls. Realizing later the trauma and pain that she had

caused, Abigail Williams, one of the first accusers, wrote a full apology for her acts. Unfortunately, she recognized her mistake far too late. Everyone did. Even though the names of the executed nineteen were cleared in 1711, what did it matter? Those who cared were long gone. Those accused of witchcraft had suffered and died for no "good" reason, for no noble cause that can be lauded and honored. And, as it is with war, the sort of prejudice and ignorance that led to the witchcraft hysteria still exists today. Let us hope, on this Memorial Day, that in remembering the victims and accusers, and their pain, that people will ponder heavily their own reasons for hate. Let us pray that remembrance will stop them from doing something that they will regret, as Abigail Williams and Elizabeth Parris did so many years ago.

We hope that this example of the dangers of human cruelty and ignorance, which can be and have been repeated so often in our history, will touch people and teach them to stop.



**The monument on the Common**

**PRISCILLA CAPEN HERB SOCIETY**

By Joyce Bergsten

In the spring of 1978 a group of women from the Topsfield Historical Society decided to raise a "kitchen garden" next to the famous Capen House. Elaine Dow was the chairman assisted by Anne Peirce, Bunny Nutter, and Mrs. H. W. Smith, an authority on colonial gardens, as a consultant.

The four-bed raised gardens required 2 workdays in May. Every plant would have been well known to Priscilla Capen. Some herbs were used for medicines, cooking dyes, repelling rodents, and freshening rooms, cloth, or "laying out the dead". Mrs. David Brown served a sit down dinner. Ten women were dressed in colonial clothing. Food was served in pewter chargers and redstone tankards for ale or cider. On future workdays men dug postholes and erected a split rail fence around the gardens.

The Priscilla Capen Herb women began to serve tea at the gardens in the summer of 1979. On August 15<sup>th</sup> Lillian Kemper and Joyce Bergsten served 20 guests with cold borage tea (that instills courage in those who drink it) and herbal goodies. Candlelight suppers were started in October at the Capen house for the members. By the summer of 1981, thirty women were helping to maintain the authentic 17<sup>th</sup> century gardens. Teas were held every Wednesday from 2 to 4 in the summer. The women created herbal crafts and charts to be sold at the Thanksgiving Boutique. A new cutting garden was created at the back of the house under the direction of Ruth Ratto, Joyce Bergsten, Kathy MacGregor, Ruth Moore and Kathy Chadwick.

In 1982 Elaine Dow wrote a book called *simples and worts* using herbs from the garden for her illustrations by David Workman. In 1983 the Parson Capen House celebrated its 300<sup>th</sup> birthday. Elaine and Bob Dow were the chairmen of the five day event with the Herb Society serving tea in the afternoons. In 1986 the Herb Society

erected a sundial under the leadership of Kathy MacGregor. A new shed designed by Ben Nutter was built and dedicated on September 9<sup>th</sup> 1991. Joyce Bergsten, president of the Herb Society, christened it.



**Dedication of the Memorial Bench    May 20, 2004**

Through the years the members of the Society have continued their summer teas, held annual meetings, made crafts and charts to be sold at the Strawberry Festival, studied about herbs as they tended the gardens, visited other gardens for ideas, and had publicity in the local papers. On May 20, 2004 they dedicated a Memorial Bench in memory of Elaine Dow, Anne Peirce, and Barbara Carpenter-three women who were the guiding light of authenticity regarding 17<sup>th</sup> century herbal history. At the Topsfield Expo 2006 Ann Savage and Joyce Bergsten represented the Topsfield Historical Society and Capen Herb Society on April 26<sup>th</sup> at Proctor School. Three hundred and fifty attended this community event which featured fifty town offices and organizations.

The Priscilla Capen Herb Society will preserve the flavors of the past in their herb gardens and summer teas for future generations.

## THE STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL

By Susan Turner and Helen DesChene

The First Strawberry Festival dates from 1968 and has been the chief fund raising event for the Historical Society since that time. It started as a social event featuring a strawberry shortcake dessert to mark the opening of the Parson Capen House for the season on the second Saturday in June. Between 1968 and 1976 invitations were sent to members of the Society to buy tickets in advance but starting in 1977, tickets were sold at the door. The dessert was served in the downstairs room of the Parish House and in 1977 there were 511 servings. One of the highlights in the earlier years was Palmer Lavallee arriving on horseback dressed as Parson Capen. Early on art exhibits by local artists were featured in the upstairs room of the Parish House. Then a silent auction was added and later a live auction where Society members were asked to contribute treasures they no longer needed. Year by year new activities were added

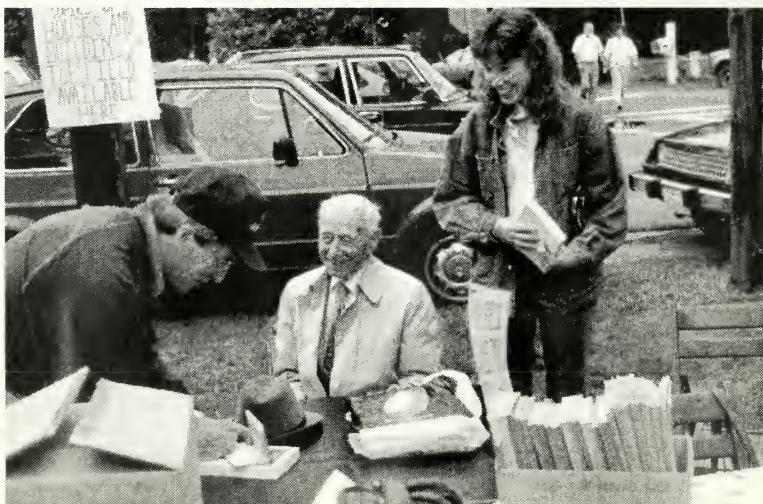


1980 Hayride

such as hayrides and pony rides for children, puppet shows, games, and sales of plants, baked goods, books, etc by local organizations. The Historical Society also had a table selling extra copies of Historical Collections, plates, mugs, and other pottery items.



1990 Selling books and pictures at the Historical Society table



1990 Lawrence Bond autographing and selling copies of his book *Houses and Buildings of Topsfield*

For many years the second Saturday in June proved to be a perfect summer day so that many brides planned to have the day of their wedding on the day of the festival. That spell has been broken a few times in recent years, however, with a particularly hard rain one year. Nevertheless, for over forty years now, the Society has been very fortunate weather-wise.

The auction was abandoned in favor of craft shows by exhibitors from all over the area. Society members ran out of articles they wished to dispose of. Ruth Glenn, who originally handled the auction, then tuned her attention to contacting vendors and organizing the craft shows. She did that for many years. The overall festival was originally co-chaired by Gordon and Ruth Brandes and Thelma and Carleton Kennerson. Ken and Debbie Crocker took over for a few years followed by the Brandes' daughter, Susan Turner who served for many years. More recently Norman Isler took over and ran it from 2003 to 2005 when it was co-chaired by Barbara Pratt.



**1990 Betty and Bill Flagg  
square dancers**

In 1993 the Congregational Church sold the Parish House and the hulling of the strawberries on the Friday evening preceding the festival and the serving of the shortcake were transferred to Fellowship Hall in the Emerson Center. When the Gould Barn was completed in 1997 exhibitions such as the quilt shows, which might have been shown in the upstairs room of the Parish House, were shown in the barn. The Strawberry Festival is a major undertaking and some eighty-five people are typically involved, most of them on Friday evening and on the following Saturday.



1989 Crafts displays as seen from a window in the Parish House

Brigitte O'Malley has handled the kitchen for many years. This job includes ordering all of the strawberries, biscuits, lemonade, whipped cream, paper goods, etc. Everything that has been ordered has to be picked up the day before the festival and delivered to the Emerson Center. Volunteers need to be recruited to help hull the berries the night before the festival and numerous volunteers are needed to serve shortcake, work in the kitchen, and sell shortcake tickets on the day of the festival.

Walter Rehak has handled the hotdog concession stand for many years. This involves ordering all of the supplies and staffing the hotdog stand the day of the festival.

The Herb Society makes sure the herb garden is ready for the festival and volunteers are needed to staff the Capen House for tours.

Barbara Pratt now (2008) heads up the Craft Show which takes months of planning and recruiting of former and new craft vendors. Her job includes sending out craft show applications, examining each application received, sending out acceptance or rejections letters, setting up the layout of the craft show, etc.

Approximately 20 non-profit organizations participate in the festival. Not only is this the Topsfield Historical Society's biggest fundraiser, but the perfect opportunity for these local non-profit organizations to raise money for their organizations. The Topsfield Historical Society has realized approximately \$8,000 annually from the Strawberry Festival in recent years (2003-2008).



1990

The festival is neatly . . .  
 summed up poetically by  
 Helen DesChene



### THE STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL

There's nothing like the strawberry  
 As June slips into view.  
 They're juicy, red and succulent  
 And tease the palate too.

Our Topsfield folk are all a buzz  
 With chores for me and you.  
 The preparations starting  
 Long before the date is due...

Then, fragrance of an evening,  
 As folk gather by the score...  
 For hulling, crushing, sugaring...  
 Done just the night before

While biscuits by the thousands  
 Are split .. in readiness,  
 Great bowls of cream are whipping  
 And we pray for nothing less

Than sunshine... on the 'morrow,  
 Crowds converging. . . on the green  
 As crafts, and games ... and nifty bands  
 Make jovial...the scene!

*In 2000 Topsfield observed the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the town's incorporation and events were scheduled through most of the year. All the programs were well attended. The highlight for many people was the parade on June 17, 2000 which took the better part of two hours to pass the reviewing stand, possibly Topsfield's longest parade.*

### **THE 350<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF TOPSFIELD'S INCORPORATION**

By Joyce Bergsten

The 350<sup>th</sup> year began with the collating of an Anniversary Events Calendar. A brief history and old photographs per month were organized into an interesting keepsake calendar.

In February Jan Jansen presented a multi-media photo presentation called "Topsfield Then and Now". On the one screen was the scene as it appeared many years ago and on the other was how it appears today. It was held in the Topsfield Library Gallery with a full capacity audience on February 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. The Friends of the Library held a formal reception following the evening performance.

On March 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> there was a Children's Pageant called "Happy Anniversary Topsfield" presented at 3 standing room only performances. It was an historic play written and directed by Sha Riordan with Joyce Bergsten as historical consultant and director assistant. There were 150 children involved through music, art and drama depicting the history of Topsfield beginning with the Agawam Indians. At the evening performance the Topsfield residents who were present and mentioned in the script were given flowers and introduced to the audience. It was a stirring evening.

There was two May events. Fifth graders at Proctor School put on a Memorial Day Program with patriotic songs and script for the town. The Memorial Day Parade was held on May 29<sup>th</sup>. Our historic events during these 350 years were recalled at the cemetery.

Homecoming Weekend began June 9<sup>th</sup> with an All Faith Service at 8PM organized by Joyce Bergsten. The clergy participating were Craig Whitcher, Jeff Gill, Father Sullivan and Father Driscoll. Mark Morgan organized the music for the service with 4 church choirs represented. There were 200 people present who sat on the lawn in front of the Congregational Church on the Topsfield Common with candlelight. They all participated in the singing of hymns in this memorable service.



**His Majesty's finest in the Parade**

The 350<sup>th</sup> parade was held on June 11<sup>th</sup>. At 1:00 PM streets were closed to traffic along Main Street. The reviewing stand with celebrities was before Proctor School. Howard "Red" Stultz was the Grand Marshall. There were many bands, floats, marchers, clowns, wagons, and of course the scouts. Residents and many visitors were lined up all along the route. Many thanks to all the 350<sup>th</sup> committee and police who helped make this such a success.

The Kuszmars organized a comedy Dinner Theatre at the Fairgrounds on June 17<sup>th</sup>. The three Topsfield garden clubs

organized a Historic House and Garden Tour on June 24<sup>th</sup>. Many people went through the lovely old homes of Topsfield residents and their gardens. Special thanks should be given to Darcey Fulton, Linda Harvey, Julie Bucchiere and Joyce Bergsten who co-chaired this event.



**Topsfield Boy Scouts in the Parade**

Barbara Binette was chairperson for all the July 4<sup>th</sup> events. Many families came to the Common in the afternoon to enjoy the pony rides, games, face painting and free ice cream. There was a great band at the Fairgrounds in the evening. A magnificent bonfire ended the evening. It was truly a 4<sup>th</sup> of July to remember.

Darcey Fulton and the Arts Council organized the Arts Festival Day on July 15<sup>th</sup>. Children participated in many crafts set up by local artists. There was a drama group and there were puppet shows.

The Middlesex Concert Band played on the Common on August 12<sup>th</sup>. There was a good crowd. Mr. Rox, a local man, directed the band. Jerry Buckley and the Kuszmars organized this event.



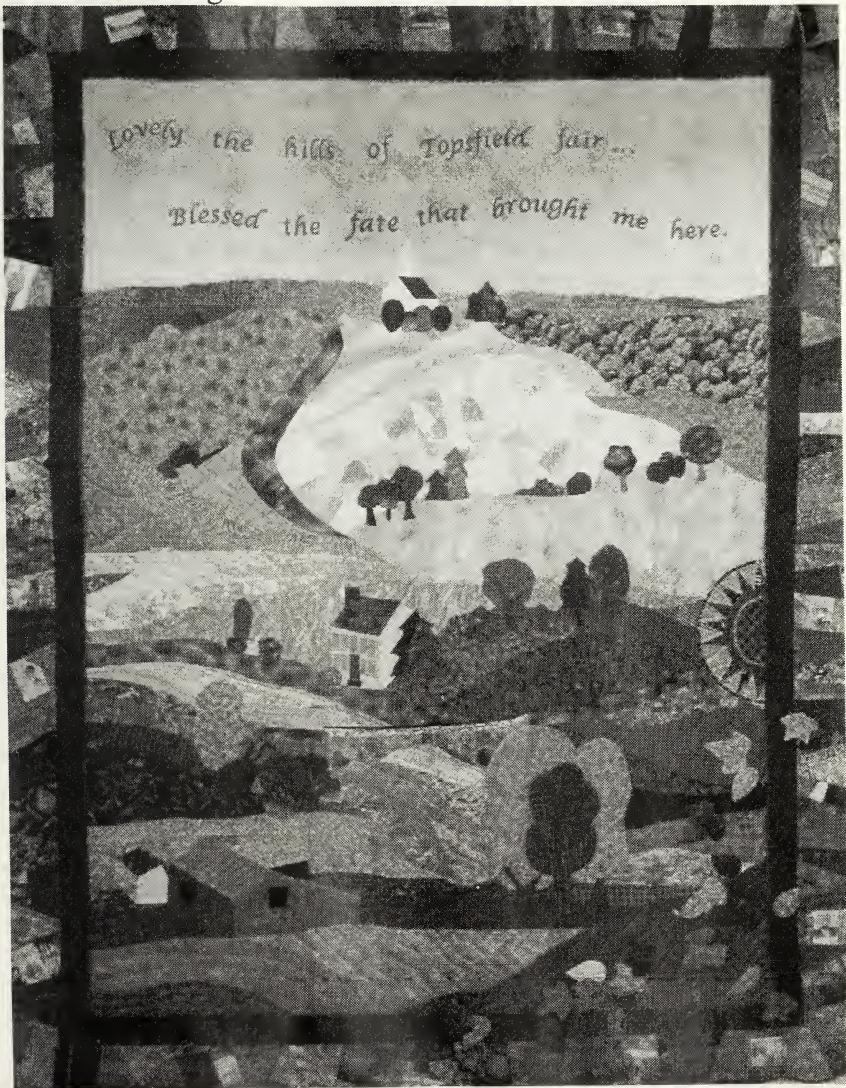
**Emerson Center was a stop on the June 24<sup>th</sup> Home and Garden Tour**

On September 30<sup>th</sup> was the Annual Topsfield Fair Parade with groups from all over Essex County taking part.

Norman Isler organized a Time Capsule. This was dedicated at the Topsfield Library on September 25<sup>th</sup> by State Representative Theodore Speliotis. Many of the fourth grade compositions and other interesting items were on display, such as photographs of the town and a letter from President Clinton, before the capsule was sealed. Hopefully it will be kept for 100 years in the library and opened in 2100.

On October 3<sup>rd</sup> the whole town was invited to "Topsfield Night at the Fair" from 4 to 10 PM.. Free admission, free rides, hot dogs, coke, popcorn and free parking were provided. Yes, it was a fantastic freebie. Best of all it was quite a night to say hello to all your friends and neighbors and end with a gala fireworks display.

A lovely quilt was dedicated at the library on October 13<sup>th</sup>. Pat Gandt and her committee created a beautiful wall hanging quilt. Mark Morgan had a musical program consisting of colonial ballads to end the evening.



Wall hanging quilt in the library

It had been a very exciting year for all of us on the committee. After four years of planning it was breathtaking to see how the people in the town responded to the many activities that were offered. Thanks to everyone who caught the spirit of the 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year.

The Committee:

Jerry Buckley, Chairman  
Dick Adams  
Joyce Bergsten  
Barbara Binette  
Darcy Fulton

Ron, Ted,  
and Mary Kuszmar  
Ron Kuszmar II  
Judy Soffron  
Norm Rutstein

## THE STEEPLE OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

By Jan Jansen

The Congregational Church of Topsfield, located on the Common, occupies a central position in town. A church has stood here since 1703 and the present edifice is the third one on this site. It is a focal point in the community. The first meetinghouse was erected here during the pastorate of Joseph Capen, close to his parsonage. And a small hill was leveled for the purpose. Little is known of that building except that the pulpit from the previous meetinghouse in the Pine Grove Cemetery area was retained.

That early building was replaced in 1759 by a larger building, a model of which, made by Benjamin Orne in 1907, is on display in the Gould Barn. A significant addition came in 1817 when a bell weighing 838½ ponds, made by Revere and Company of Boston, was purchased for \$400 and hung in the belfry. The town voted that "it be rung on all public days and tolled for funerals".

Before 1823 there was no separation between town and parish and the minister's salary and church repairs were decided at town meetings all held in the church building, known as the meetinghouse. The designation meetinghouse was retained after the town and parish became separate entities.

By 1842 the second meetinghouse on the Common was in poor repair and, as was the case in 1749, the decision was made to replace it. The old building was taken down in 1842 and \$222.82



Model of the 1759 meetinghouse

was realized in the sale of portions of the building to several purchasers. The contract for a new building was awarded to Mark R. Jewett of Rowley for \$4,300 and the Paul Revere bell was installed in the new belfry. While the Capen pulpit was exhibited in the 1850 bicentennial of the town's incorporation, all traces of the old pulpit were lost shortly thereafter. The new building was dedicated on February 22, 1843 during the pastorate of Rev. Anson McLoud.

With the exception of a vestry and organ loft added in 1853, the exterior appearance of the church remained the same until 1967 when the chancel area was redesigned requiring change in the rear extension and an approved access to the rear balcony in the church called for the addition of 4-ft wings on the north and south sides of the building. A handicap entrance was added at a later time.

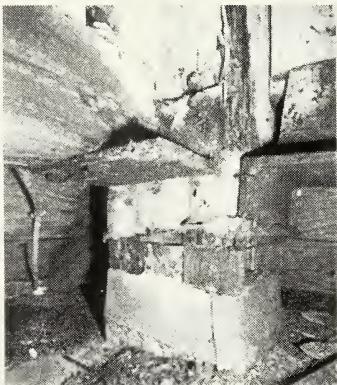
During the last half century problems have surfaced and have been dealt with in ways nicely described in the church's internet website, [www.topsfieldchurch.org](http://www.topsfieldchurch.org). Much of what follows is taken directly from that write-up.

The meetinghouse project addressed structural issues identified in the attic, tower, belfry, and spire as well as exterior sheathing issues on the main façade and steeple rot and missing or damaged decorative elements. One component of this project was the removal, restoration, and reinstallation of the spire. As testimony to the craftsmanship of the builders of the meetinghouse, the spire survived over 100 years before it needed repair. During the past 50 years repairs using steel supports and "band-aid" efforts have led to further deterioration. This project redressed the unfortunate repairs of recent years which were occasioned by financial constraints. This time the steeple was rebuilt in keeping with the original structural integrity and thereby giving it a long-lasting future life. Necessary repairs were also made to the cradle of the Paul Revere bell.

The church commissioned the preservation firm of Finch and Rose (the same firm that did a similar study of the Capen House) to make an assessment of what needed to be done to restore this historic building. The key word here is restoration. Restoring the building made the church eligible for grants from several organizations including

\$50,000 from the Massachusetts Historical Commission,  
\$15,000 from the Topsfield Historical Society Kimball Fund,  
\$7,500 from the Essex National Heritage Commission, and  
\$5,000 from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

It was determined that the best approach from both historical and economic points of view was to restore the meetinghouse to its structural integrity using materials and construction techniques with which it was built originally. Preservation Timber Framing, Inc of Eliot, Maine headed by Aaron Sturgis, was awarded the contract. The same firm participated in the Gould Barn and Capen House projects,



Examples of “band-aid” repairs and deterioration

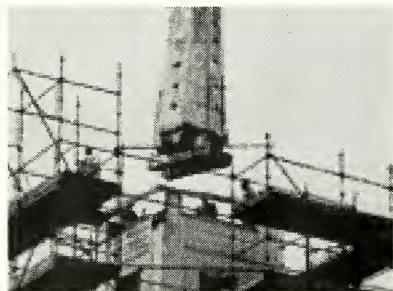
Water infiltration has led to rot and paint deterioration of the steeple and the main façade. More specifically there has been the discovery of rotted beams in the base of the tower, lack of positive connections between the tower posts and roof trusses, poor drainage conditions at the floor of the belfry, rotted timbers in the

belfry roof and floor, overstressed members in the roof truss that supports the tower posts, and defects in the joists supporting the plaster ceiling in the nave. The belfry and the steeple tilted to the north caused by rot in the southeast corner of the belfry framing. The main façade pediment and portico had suffered from water infiltration and rot in places

and required intense refurbishment. Also in need of restoration were decorative elements on the exterior of the belfry including a gothic balustrade, ballflowers, and four small spires.

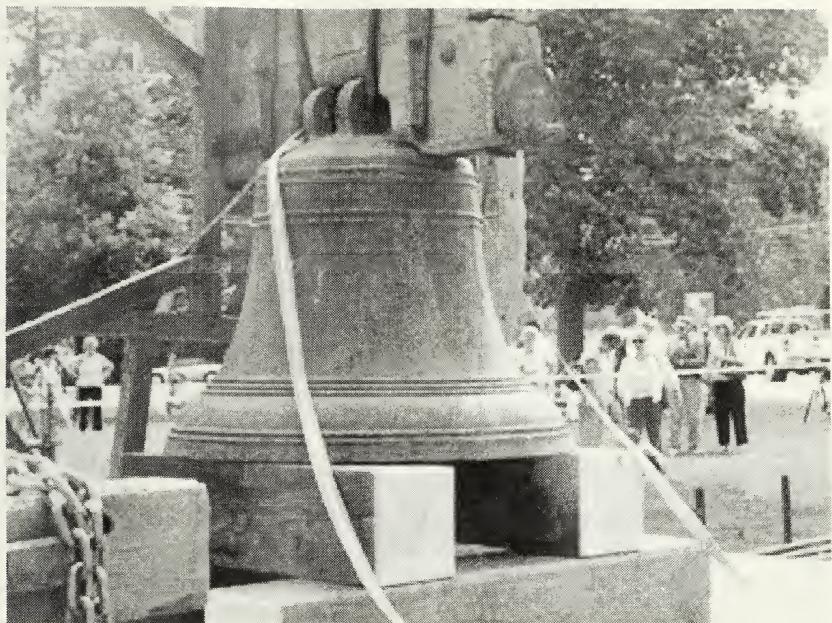


**Water damage**



**Taking down the steeple and belfry**

On July 28, 2006 the spire came down, followed by the Paul Revere bell, and the belfry. A large crowd witnessed the procedure and Maine Street was closed to traffic from 9 AM to 1 PM. The operation was carried out with the aid of a large crane positioned on the walk leading into the church. While considerable advance work had been done to prepare for this event, the final separation of the steeple and belfry from the rest of the building was completed just before lift-off. All this took some time, but was handled very efficiently. The whole operation proceeded very smoothly by an expert crew.



**The Paul Revere bell**

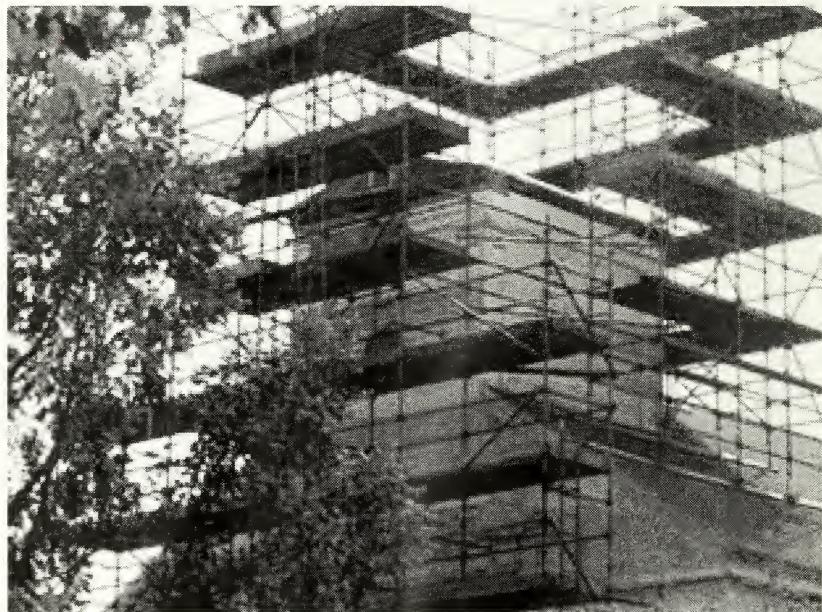


**The crane and steeple staging**

The steeple and belfry were lowered to the lawn in front of the church where a covered workshop had been set up. All repair

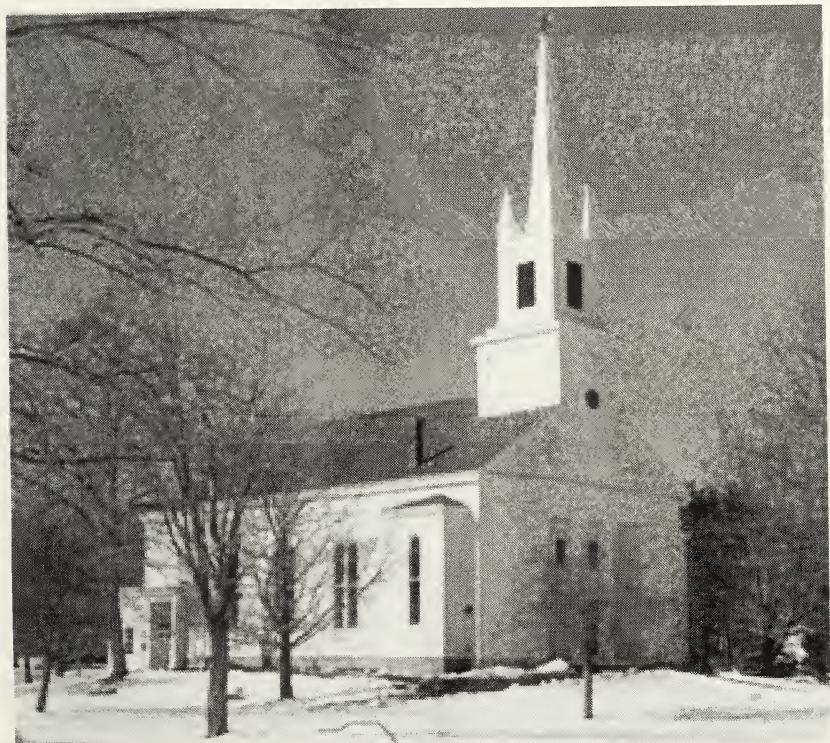
work was carried out in the weeks that followed. The Paul Revere bell was loaded on a flat bed truck which was driven to a place where all could see the bell. Later the bell in its cradle was taken to a safe storage place. Lastly, a cover was positioned over the opening where the bell had been.

All summer long and into the fall work proceeded on the Common, in the covered shop on the Common, and in the church. Finally, on November 6<sup>th</sup> all was in readiness to reassemble the component parts, and this again called for the crane.



The capped steeple

In the spring of 2007 repairs were made to the church exterior followed by a complete paint job. Now, with a vertical steeple, and pristine white surfaces, the Congregational Church of Topsfield again graces the Common of one of New England's prettiest villages.



**The Congregational Church of Topsfield      February 2008**

## THE TOPSFIELD TOWN HALL CLOCK

By Robert Winship and Norman Isler



**The Town Hall Clock**

The Town Hall Clock was purchased in 1879 from the George M. Stevens Company for \$325.00 through the efforts of the Topsfield Drama Club. Since the town hall was built in 1874 there was no clock for the first five years of its existence. To raise clock funds the club produced plays, some of which were likely held in the town hall's second floor auditorium.

George Stevens began manufacturing clocks in 1864 in Boston. He came from Maine and lived in Cambridge. For fifty years the

company focused upon the manufacture and sale of public clocks and also fog bell and fire alarm equipment. They competed successfully against the industry leader, E Howard & Co. An article in the National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors Bulletin of April 1994 mentions the company manufactured 22 tower clocks from 1864 to 1916, of which 6 model 3A's remain, one of which is the Topsfield clock

For its first 124 years the clock relied upon volunteers to climb up the unlighted and unheated staircase and rewind it every eight days. This regular winding did not always occur and by 1989 the clock was no longer operating until Edwin Bowerman was appointed keeper. Bowerman adjusted the mechanism and kept it wound until 1996-97 when Dick Adams took his place. By 2000 the clock again ceased operation due to Adam's death.

In June, 2002 the selectmen appointed Bob Winship and Norm Isler Keepers of the Clock. At that time Winship was Chairman of the Finance Committee and Norm was President of the Historical Society. Both were retired engineers. Isler in turn recruited Bill Toth, a retired MIT Draper Lab engineer and clock fancier, who had rejuvenated the Town of Leominster's clock. Isler read of Toth's accomplishment and contacted him through the newspaper's editor. The three

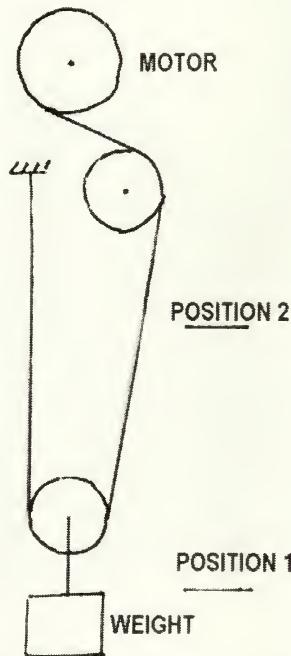


Part of stairway to the clock

of them, working as a team, put Topsfield's clock back in working order. Toth repaired the escapement mechanism bushings and journals in his Bolton, MA basement work shop while Winship

and Isler refinished the clock hands with gold leaf. They also wrote a winding system specification and sought a vendor to meet it. The concept was for the system to drive the clock through its own mechanism by providing an electric drive to turn the shaft previously turned by a hand crank.

The Regulator Time Company of Manhattan, Kansas was selected to supply the winding mechanism; however upon receipt of the equipment and wiring diagram it was determined to be inadequate in several respects; principally in the system's logic which would have maintained system operation even through a limit switch failure mode. The time delay relay's switching capacity to turn off the drive motor was also found to be inadequate. The vendor was not responsive to either concern. Winship and Isler redesigned the system to overcome both shortcomings while still using nearly all of the original components.



The system works as shown in this simplified diagram. As the clock runs the weight slowly descends and on reaching POSITION 1 the clock would stop except at that point a relay operates to apply power to the motor to bring the weight up again. When the weight reaches POSITION 2 two things happen; (1) power to the motor is turned off and (2) a

time delay circuit operates. This is a safety feature. Normally the time delay does nothing, but in the event that the motor power is not shut off when the weight reaches POSITION 2 a relay associated with the delay circuit turns off the power to the entire system after a very short time interval and a red light comes on in a control panel and stays on. The clock will continue to run for about a week because the weight will slowly head for POSITION 1. In the meanwhile the Keeper of the Clock can investigate the problem.

The final step in the clock renovation project was to install a light to illuminate the clock and tower facing the street. With the help of Bill Farum, town resident and lighting consultant, a narrow beam 150 watt spotlight was specified and ordered. It was mounted on the main trunk of a spruce tree in front of town hall utilizing a conveniently located opening in its branches that provided an unobstructed light path to the tower.

Cost of the light was underwritten by the Historical Society and Nippy Wells, a local resident who was interested in the project. The light was installed in the fall of 2004 by Winship and Isler working with Park & Cemetery personnel.

Funding for the renovation/winding project came from two sources; Sue Kimball, widow of Jack Kimball, and the Topsfield Historical Society. Mr. Kimball had been Town Moderator for 28 years as well as a Society Director for many years. No town funds were used for this project. A plaque commemorating the clock's rebirth in memory of Kimball was created and hangs in the Town Hall alongside those of other figures who have made a lasting contribution to the town.

**JOHN KIMBALL JR. MEMORIAL TRUST**

By Norman Isler

The John Kimball Jr. Memorial Trust was organized on January 27, 2004 by and between the Topsfield Historical Society and Richard (Rick) Kimball, Susanne Kimball and Norman Isler as the initial trustees. Its purpose is to honor John Kimball, Jr.'s lifetime tradition of success by creating a program to provide scholarships, books, tuition and other educational and research expenses to both graduate and undergraduate students, college, university and graduate school instructors, professors and others who have excelled in and/or have a passion for the study of history and related disciplines and who reside in or have a substantial connection with Topsfield.

Mr. Kimball was born in Wakefield, Massachusetts and lived in Topsfield for 43 years before moving to California in 2001 to be near his children. Upon graduating from Dartmouth in December of 1942 he joined the U.S. Marine Corps, serving as a fighter pilot during World War II and the Korean Conflict. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and retired from the reserves in 1964 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He graduated from Harvard Law School in 1948 and in 1952 joined the Boston law firm of Hale and Dorr where he practiced law as a distinguished trial attorney for 34 years, becoming a partner in 1964. Early in his career he served as assistant counsel to Joseph Welch, chief counsel for the U. S. Army, during the Army- McCarthy hearings.

Mr. Kimball cared very much about Topsfield and was very active in town affairs, serving as Town Moderator for 28 years. He was a member of the Historic District Commission and a long time director of the Topsfield Historical Society and several other organizations. He died in 2003 and is survived by his wife, Susanne, children Sara, Richard and Margo, and two grandchildren, Jacklyn and Ryan.

Administration of the scholarship program is undertaken by the Topsfield Historical Society. Initial funding was provided by Rick (Richard) Kimball in the form of restricted Netflix and Altiris stock which was sold in March/April 2004 for a total of \$497,187.48. This amount was then placed in a Vanguard Money Market account while a financial advisory committee was organized by Isler of society members having investment experience or interest in financial matters. This appointed committee operates under guidelines approved by the society directors and meets quarterly or whenever a committee member feels a need to convene a special meeting. The committee's purpose is to provide investment advice to the society. Both the society president and treasurer are non voting members of the committee.

Appendix I reproduces the charter of the trust, while Appendix II outlines the operating procedures of the Financial Advisory Committee.

\$62,621 has been awarded to 28 applicants since the founding of the trust in 2004 through July 2008 and, thanks to the advice offered by the financial advisory committee, the principal as of June 27, 2008 was \$507,339.00.

Applicants may apply by writing a letter of request to the John Kimball Jr. Memorial Scholarship Program, c/o the Topsfield Historical Society, PO Box 323, Topsfield, MA 01983. A letter of request form is located on the society's web site [www.topsfieldhistory.org](http://www.topsfieldhistory.org) .

## **APPENDIX I**

### **THE JOHN KIMBALL,, JR. MEMORIAL TRUST**

#### **ARTICLE I CREATION OF THE TRUST**

##### **1.1 Trust Agreement.**

This Trust Agreement is entered into by and between THE TOPSFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY, as grantor (the "Grantor"), and RICHARD KIMBALL, SUSANNE KIMBALL and NORMAN ISLER, as the initial trustees. All references to the "Trustee" shall refer. to the initial Trustees and their successors in interest.

##### **1.2 Name.**

The name of this Trust shall be The John Kimball, Jr. Memorial Trust. The Trust is dated January 27, 2004

##### **1.3 Purpose.**

The Trust will honor John Kimball, Jr.'s lifetime tradition of success by creating and administering a scholarship program to be known as The John Kimball, Jr. Scholarship for the Study of History (the "Scholarship Program"). The purposes of the Scholarship Program are to provide:

- (a) scholarships and grants for tuition, books and other educational and research expenses,
- (b) to undergraduate students, graduate students and college, university and graduate school instructors and professors;
- (c) who have excelled in and/or have a passion for the study of history and related disciplines, and
- (d) who reside in, or have a substantial connection to, Topsfield, Massachusetts.

##### **1.4 Initial Funding.**

The initial property contributed to the Trust by the Grantor as of the date hereof was restricted Netflix and Altiris stock sold in March/April 2004 for \$497,187.48.

##### **1.5 Additional Funding.**

Any person may add property to the Trust by any appropriate legal means provided that the Trustee may reject any property that he or she deems inappropriate.

## **ARTICLE 2 ADMINISTRATION OF THE TRUST**

### **2.1 Distribution of Income.**

The Trustee shall add one fourth (1/4) of the annual net income of the Trust to principal. The remaining three-fourths (3/4) of the net income of the Trust shall be applied to and used in connection with the Scholarship Program. To the extent that such remaining net income is not so used in that year, it shall be added to principal.

### **2.2 Distribution of Principal.**

Principal may be applied to and used in connection with the Scholarship Program so long as three Trustees are serving and such Trustees unanimously determine that such application and use is clearly necessary in any year to further the goals of the Scholarship Program.

### **2.3 Allocations between Principal and Income.**

The determination of what is principal or income and any apportionment or allocation of income, gains and expenses (including compensation) between principal and income shall be determined by the Trustee in his or her reasonable discretion.

### **2.4 Distribution of Trust Corpus on Termination.**

Upon termination of the Trust as provided for in Article 6, all of the Trust corpus will be distributed to the Topsfield Historical Society (or to its successor in interest or, if none, to another regional historical society selected by the Trustee).

## **ARTICLE 3 ADMINISTRATION OF THE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

The Trustees shall have broad discretion to develop and adopt policies and procedures to govern all material decisions relating to the Scholarship Program (e.g., application requirements, dollar amount of individual and annual awards, selection criteria, publicity, deciding against awards in years without qualified applicants, ensuring scholarship or grant does not reduce other financial aid or scholarships, etc.), and to amend such policies and procedures from time to time.

## **ARTICLE 4 THE OFFICE OF TRUSTEE**

### **4.1 Appointment of Trustees.**

The Trust shall have three (3) Trustees. The initial Trustees shall be RICHARD KIMBALL, SUSANNE KIMBALL and NORMAN ISLER. If any Trustee becomes unwilling or unable to serve as a Trustee (including by reason of death, disability, resignation or removal), the other Trustees shall appoint in writing another Trustee to serve as successor. In the event that Trustees are unable to agree on the selection of a successor Trustee, the Kimball family Trustee, see below, shall have final appointment authority. Notwithstanding anything herein to the contrary, until such successor Trustee is appointed and serving, except as provided for in Section 2.2, the remaining Trustees shall have and be permitted to exercise all of the powers which the Trustees hereunder would have had if no vacancy had occurred. Successor Trustees may be individuals or corporations provided that at all times during the duration of the Trust, at least one of the three Trustees shall be a descendant of John J. Kimball, Jr. and one of the three Trustees shall be an elected officer of the Topsfield Historical Society (or its successor in interest or, if none, of a regional historical society selected by the Trustees).

### **4.2 Resignation or Removal of a Trustee.**

Any Trustee may resign at any time by delivering written notice of his or her resignation to the other Trustees. Any Trustee, other than Susanne Kimball or Richard Kimball, may be removed for cause upon the vote of the other Trustees by the delivery of written notice to the removed Trustee. For this purpose, the term "cause" shall mean the conviction or plea of nolo contendere to a felony, or any other act of dishonesty or willful misconduct that may have a material adverse affect on the Trust or its reputation. In addition to the foregoing, any Trustee may be removed upon the vote of the other Trustees by delivery of written notice to the removed Trustee if such Trustee is mentally incapacitated and cannot reasonably carry out the duties of a trustee. Such resignation or removal shall take effect on the thirty-first day after the date the notice was delivered.

### **4.3 Professional Assistance to Trustees.**

The Trustee is authorized to employ and pay reasonable compensation to any custodian, investment advisor, scholarship administrator, educational consultant, attorney, accountant or other agent to assist the Trustee in administering the Trust.

#### **4.4 Decisions of Trustees.**

If two Trustees are serving, all decisions shall be unanimous, and if more than two Trustees are serving, the decisions of the majority shall control.

#### **4.5 Exculpatory Provisions.**

The Trustee and his or her estate (each, or collectively as the context requires, an "Indemnified Party"), shall not be responsible for, and the Trust shall hold the Indemnified Party harmless from and against, any and all claims, demands, causes of action, liabilities, losses, costs and expenses, including costs of suit and reasonable attorneys' fees arising out of, from, or in connection with any action taken or -not taken, or any exercise or failure to exercise in good faith any discretion granted him or her, by the Trustee under this Agreement, unless that act or failure to act or exercise or failure to exercise any discretion, constitutes gross negligence or willful misconduct. No Trustee shall be liable for any acts or omissions to act committed by any predecessor or successor Trustee. This provision shall survive the period during which the Trustee is acting under this Agreement. No Trustee shall be required to provide a bond or surety for his or her performance hereunder.

#### **4.6 Reasonable Compensation.**

The Trustee shall be entitled to reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred in connection with his or her activities on behalf of the Trust.

### **ARTICLE 5 POWERS OF THE TRUSTEE**

The Trustee is vested with the broadest powers conferred on trustees under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The enumeration of the following specific investment powers shall not be construed to otherwise limit the Trustees' broad general powers. Subject only to his or her fiduciary obligations and to the creation of an investment strategy expressly designed to further the purposes of the Trust, the Trustee shall be vested with and shall have all the rights, powers and privileges that an absolute owner of property would have, including the power to hold any property (even if concentrated, unproductive or property otherwise reasonably considered inappropriate as a trust investment) and invest and reinvest the Trust principal and income, if accumulated, and to use it to buy or otherwise acquire every kind of property and to make every kind of investment, specifically including but not limited to interest-bearing accounts; corporate obligations of every kind; bonds, debentures, mortgages, deeds of trust, mortgage participations, and notes; real estate; preferred and common stock, including stock of any corporate Trustee; mortgage participations; shares

of investment trusts, investment companies, venture capital and private equity funds, mutual funds and common trust funds; general partnerships; limited partnerships (as either a general or limited partner); limited liability companies; limited liability partnerships; and any other property of any type, as the Trustee, in his or her discretion, may select.

## **ARTICLE 6 TERMINATION**

The Trust shall terminate in 150 years (unless it is required to terminate sooner under Massachusetts law in which case the Trust will terminate on the legally-required termination date) Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Trustees in their discretion may terminate the Trust earlier at any time that the principal of the Trust is less than \$25,000.

## **ARTICLE 7 GOVERNING LAW**

The Trust shall be governed by the law of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

## **APPENDIX II FINANCIAL ADVISORY GROUP**

This Group is appointed by the President of the Society consisting of at least three Society members in good standing having background or interest in financial matters and who agree to serve a minimum of one year. Its purpose is to advise the Board of Directors on Society asset management. The Group may also serve to advise the Trustees of the Kimball Memorial Fund.

The Chairman is chosen by the President from the Group members. A quorum is 2/3 of the regular members for any recommendation to be made to the Board. The Society President, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer are ex-officio (do not vote) members of the Group. The President (or Treasurer in the president's absence) has the authority to act on a Group recommendation for the Board if time does not permit awaiting the Board's next regular meeting.

In carrying out their responsibilities the Group is guided by the current investment policy approved by the Board as set forth below. The Group provides investment counseling to the Executive Board. In so doing it will: (1) review the Society's portfolio and cash balance at least quarterly, (2) recommend changes in the portfolio and cash balance to the Executive Board and (3) suggest changes in the investment policy.

## INVESTMENT POLICY

### Statement of Intent

It is the intention of the Society in adopting this policy to set prudent limits for both asset allocation and asset quality. While it is the desire of the Society to maximize the return on assets available for investment, the express intent of the board is to be conservative. Potential market risk should be a factor in asset class allocation considerations.

### Policy

All funds of the Society are the fiduciary responsibility of the Board of Directors. The Board's policy should reflect the organization's financial status and philosophy regarding the investment of assets. In carrying out its responsibilities, the Board will consider the advice and counsel provided by the Financial Advisory Group .Both the Board and the Group will act in accordance with the bylaws, all applicable laws and regulations and the policies, if any, attached to this document.

### Policy modification

This policy is to be reviewed and possibly revised at least annually by the Board to ensure it adequately reflects the organization's philosophy and the capital markets.

### Definitions

**Money Market Securities** (or cash) are invested in funds that maintain a fixed price (Net Asset Value) of \$1. As such, this type of instrument is not subject to day-to-day price fluctuations. Funds so deposited are available daily on demand, usually until noon, and pay interest monthly.

**Equity Securities** represent an ownership interest, or the right to acquire an ownership interest, in an issuer. Different types of equity securities provide different voting and dividend rights and priority in case of bankruptcy of the issuer. Equity securities include common stocks, preferred stocks, convertible securities and warrants.

**Fixed Income Securities** are used by issuers to borrow money. The issuer pays a fixed, variable, or floating rate of interest, and must repay the amount borrowed at the maturity of the security. Some debt securities, such as zero coupon bonds, do not pay current interest but are sold at a discount from their face values.

Fixed-income securities include corporate debt securities, convertible bonds, government securities, and mortgage and other asset backed securities.

### Credit Quality

For **Fixed-Income Securities**, assets judged to be "investment grade" are defined as those which have a rating Baa or better by Moody's and/or Standard & Poor's rating services. At time of purchase, securities for the Society account must be rated at least Baa by both services. Rating, downgrades by either service will subject holdings to watch list status, and immediate review. Unless expressly recommended otherwise by the Committee, an individual bond that falls below investment grade status by either standard should be completely liquidated.

For **Equity Securities**, market capitalization must be at least \$2 billion at time of purchase and, if a mutual fund, its rating must be at least a 4star as rated by Morningstar. While no minimum holding is required, it is expected that no asset will represent a amount smaller than 0.5% of the equity portfolio. No individual equity holding should be more than 5.0% of the equity portfolio when purchased, and should never exceed 7.5% of total equities. These restrictions do not apply to mutual fund holdings.

### Permissible Investments

United States Treasuries  
Government Agency Obligations  
Money Market Mutual Funds  
Certificates of Deposit issued by Federally insured Lending, institutions  
Bond Mutual Fund  
Individual Equities  
Corporate Bonds rated "A" or higher  
Equity Mutual Funds- Domestic  
Equity Mutual Funds- Foreign  
Limited Partnerships  
Covered Calls

### Prohibited Investments

Short Sales  
Purchases of letter stock, private placements or direct payments  
Leveraged Transactions  
Purchases of securities not readily marketable  
Commodities transactions

Puts, straddles, or strategies other than covered calls  
Purchases of oil and gas properties, or other natural resource related properties  
Futures, use of margin, or investments in any derivatives not explicitly  
permitted in this policy statement  
Investments by investment managers in their own securities, their affiliates, or  
subsidiaries

## **Gifts**

Gift investments will be governed by the intent of the donor. If no investment vehicle is specified the Group will decide on the type of investment. The investment and its appreciation will be separately identified and used for the purpose defined by the donor. If no purpose is specified the gift shall be used for long term investment and in no case for day to day operations.

## **Use of Outside Investment Consultants**

This policy neither promotes nor prohibits the use of outside investment consultants or managers. The Financial Advisory Group is authorized to negotiate arrangements for their use if it deems advisable. The actual engagement would require the approval of the Executive Board. Outside consultants or managers would be subject to the provisions of this policy statement.

## **Conflicts of Interest**

It is the responsibility of each group member to fully disclose a conflict of interest or the "Appearance" of a conflict regarding any matter on the agenda of the Financial Advisory Group.

The following specific restrictions apply:

- A) The Financial Advisory Group shall not purchase securities from a firm with which a Group member is affiliated.
- B) Investments will not be purchased from or sold to any member of the Society's Board of Directors.





